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IMAGINE™ Magazine

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..... **IMAGINE magazine, No 27, June 1985** .....
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Editorial

There are few things which upset the smooth running of a magazine more than the loss of one of the team. In our case, it's worse, since the running here is never smooth, and we've lost two people. One minute, they were here, the next.... So, we wave a tear-stained hanky as our Art Supervisor, Phil Kaye, and Advertising Supremo, Lesley Hudson-Jessop move on to greater things. Separately, I might add. We wish them every success.

Inevitably, this will mean changes to the presentation of your magazine, and we hope you will bear with us while we sort things out. We managed to find Ian Williamson's address, so watch out for the return of Auchter in a new adventure. We've had dozens of new writers and artists writing in, and you will be seeing some of their work in due course. The offer is still open — if you want to see your work in print, the first step is up to you.

Keith Thomson

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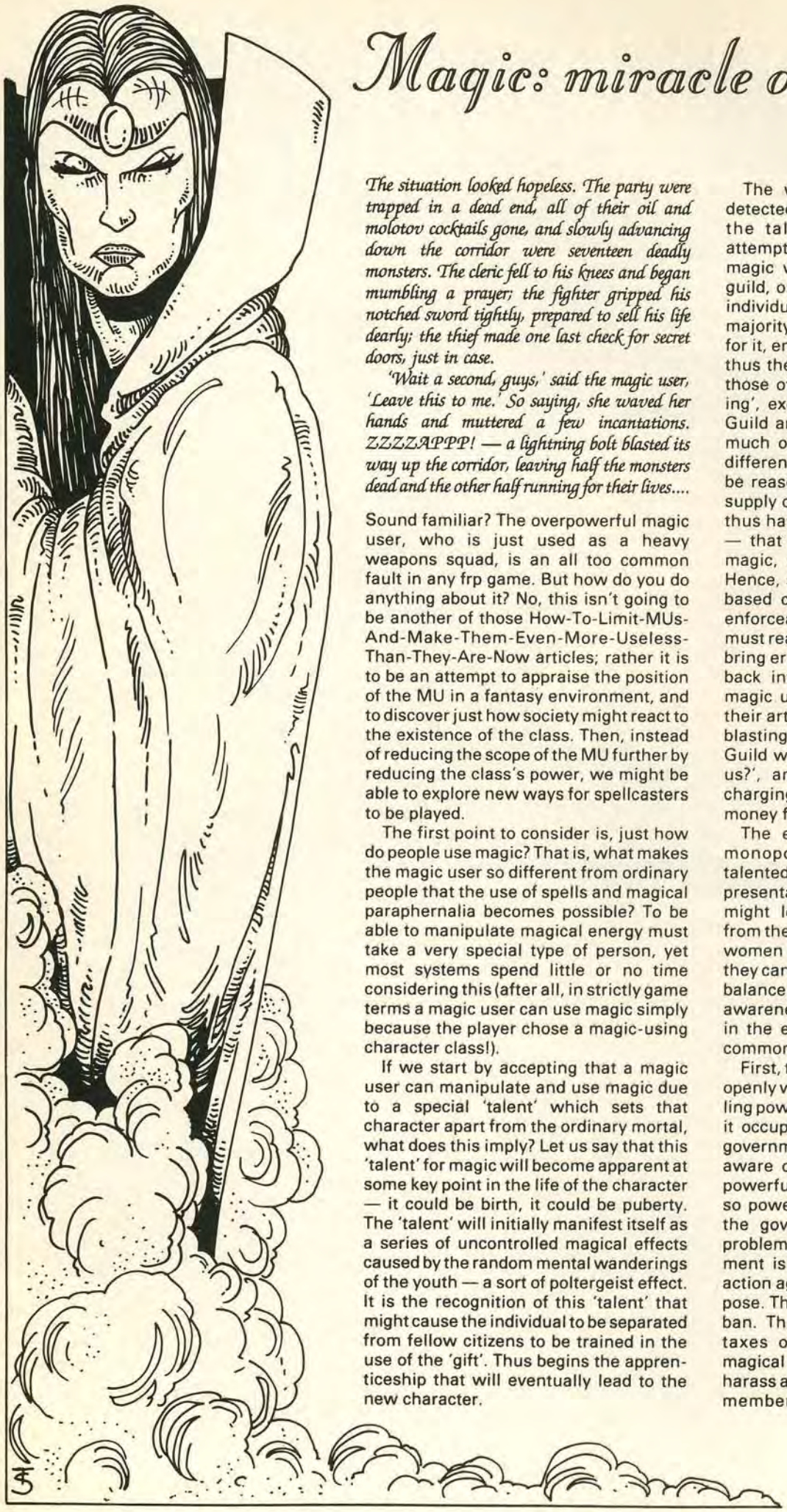


Magic: miracle or menace?

The situation looked hopeless. The party were trapped in a dead end, all of their oil and molotov cocktails gone, and slowly advancing down the corridor were seventeen deadly monsters. The cleric fell to his knees and began mumbling a prayer; the fighter gripped his notched sword tightly, prepared to sell his life dearly; the thief made one last check for secret doors, just in case.

'Wait a second, guys,' said the magic user, 'Leave this to me.' So saying, she waved her hands and muttered a few incantations. ZZZZAPPP! — a lightning bolt blasted its way up the corridor, leaving half the monsters dead and the other half running for their lives....

Sound familiar? The overpowerful magic user, who is just used as a heavy weapons squad, is an all too common fault in any frp game. But how do you do anything about it? No, this isn't going to be another of those How-To-Limit-MUs-And-Make-Them-Even-More-Useless-Than-They-Are-Now articles; rather it is to be an attempt to appraise the position of the MU in a fantasy environment, and to discover just how society might react to the existence of the class. Then, instead of reducing the scope of the MU further by reducing the class's power, we might be able to explore new ways for spellcasters to be played.

The first point to consider is, just how do people use magic? That is, what makes the magic user so different from ordinary people that the use of spells and magical paraphernalia becomes possible? To be able to manipulate magical energy must take a very special type of person, yet most systems spend little or no time considering this (after all, in strictly game terms a magic user can use magic simply because the player chose a magic-using character class!).

If we start by accepting that a magic user can manipulate and use magic due to a special 'talent' which sets that character apart from the ordinary mortal, what does this imply? Let us say that this 'talent' for magic will become apparent at some key point in the life of the character — it could be birth, it could be puberty. The 'talent' will initially manifest itself as a series of uncontrolled magical effects caused by the random mental wanderings of the youth — a sort of poltergeist effect. It is the recognition of this 'talent' that might cause the individual to be separated from fellow citizens to be trained in the use of the 'gift'. Thus begins the apprenticeship that will eventually lead to the new character.

The very fact that this gift can be detected and trained will put a control on the talent, even before the owner attempts to use it. The training and use of magic will probably be controlled by a guild, or some sort of association of like individuals. This guild should have the majority of the talented people working for it, enmeshed within its structure, and thus there will be little time available to those of moderate skill to go 'adventuring', except where the interests of the Guild are being served. It depends very much on how powerful the Guild is in different locations, of course, but it would be reasonable if it had control over the supply of materials for magic, and would thus have some control over the 'illegal' — that is to say, unlicensed — use of magic, or its use for illegal purposes. Hence, straight away we have a legally-based constraint upon magic users — enforceable by an organisation which must reasonably be expected to be able to bring errant low- and medium-level MUs back into line. The Guild will prevent magic users taking a selfish attitude to their art, learning it purely as a means of blasting orcs and grabbing treasure. The Guild will want to know 'what's in it for us?', and this means more than just charging adventuring MUs large sums of money for training.

The existence of the Guild and its monopoly or near-monopoly on the talented also presents the problem of its presentation as an elite, and this in turn might lead to jealousy and alienation from the non-talented. Ordinary men and women will be prejudiced against things they cannot comprehend. The Guild must balance its position of privilege with an awareness that it must protect its image in the eyes of the government and the common populace.

First, the Guild must be seen to support openly whichever government or controlling power has authority over the territory it occupies. If support is not given, the government is going to feel threatened, aware of the existence of a small, but powerful minority interest. If the Guild is so powerful that it could easily dismiss the government, this might not be a problem, but in most cases the government is going to be able to take some action against the threat the magic users pose. This could stop short of an outright ban. The government might put heavy taxes on the materials required for magical experimentation, or maybe just harass and place surveillance upon Guild members. Unless the Guild actually

The Magic User in Society by Mike Lewis

wants the burden of controlling an entire society, against the interests of other, equally powerful interests — the clerical lobby, for example — it will have to steer a safe, central course.

The greatest threat to the Talent Guild will always be from the religious interest groups. The priesthood will see the Guild and its members as a threat to its position and prestige amongst the ignorant masses. It's one thing for a religious group to squabble with another, disputing whose deity has the greater claim to an area or whatever; if the clerics feel challenged by a secular grouping, with no ties to deities, they will probably unite in self-defence. Possibly the magically-talented could be seen as a threat to religious ceremonies and ideals — for what is a marvel brought about by the use of magic but a miracle performed without religious faith? The clerics could ask: 'where does the power for these miracles come from?' It would be a simple matter to play upon the ignorance and superstition of the populace to bring persecution down upon the magic-using community.

Magic might be more acceptable to the rulers of a country, educated to some small understanding of its nature, but the common citizens will feel the opposite, particularly if it is no use to them. They might be unwilling to help the talented, causing adventuring magic users to go without such everyday things as a bed for the night. Would an ignorant innkeeper let someone spend the night at his inn if that person has strange and unknown powers? He might skip off without paying the bill! If he sees the magic user create light from nowhere, or levitate from the horse, then mistrust is sure to follow. What other powers does the stranger have? Reading a person's mind, perhaps? Even the simplest, most ignorant peasant has secrets that would cause harm if they were revealed.

The open display of magic, and its use to perform simple tasks that are normally done by hand, should be curbed. The magic user will learn this necessity from the Guild during training, and from the school of life if the power is flaunted. If the talented are to be accepted by a society, they must prove themselves useful. They must make a valuable contribution to community life. The Guild will feel that this is best done by providing services like pest control for farmers, fertility drugs, etc. If nothing else, the money charged for these services would provide a reasonable income for the Guild and its members.

Of course, most magic users in the D&D® games concentrate on the attack spells, researching more and more deadly spells in attempts to slay anything they come up against. In most societies, these 'experts' would quickly find themselves being asked to help the government of the area against opponents without and within. In fact, top quality magic users would find themselves as more or less permanent 'guests' of a local magnate.

As you can see from the above extrapolation of a few thoughts about society's reactions to the magic user — and the adjustments both would have to make — there is more to being a spellcaster than just the adventuring weapons squad. If you put some thought into the structure of your campaign society and the place of magic users in it, a much more interesting game can result. Consider the following three suggestions:

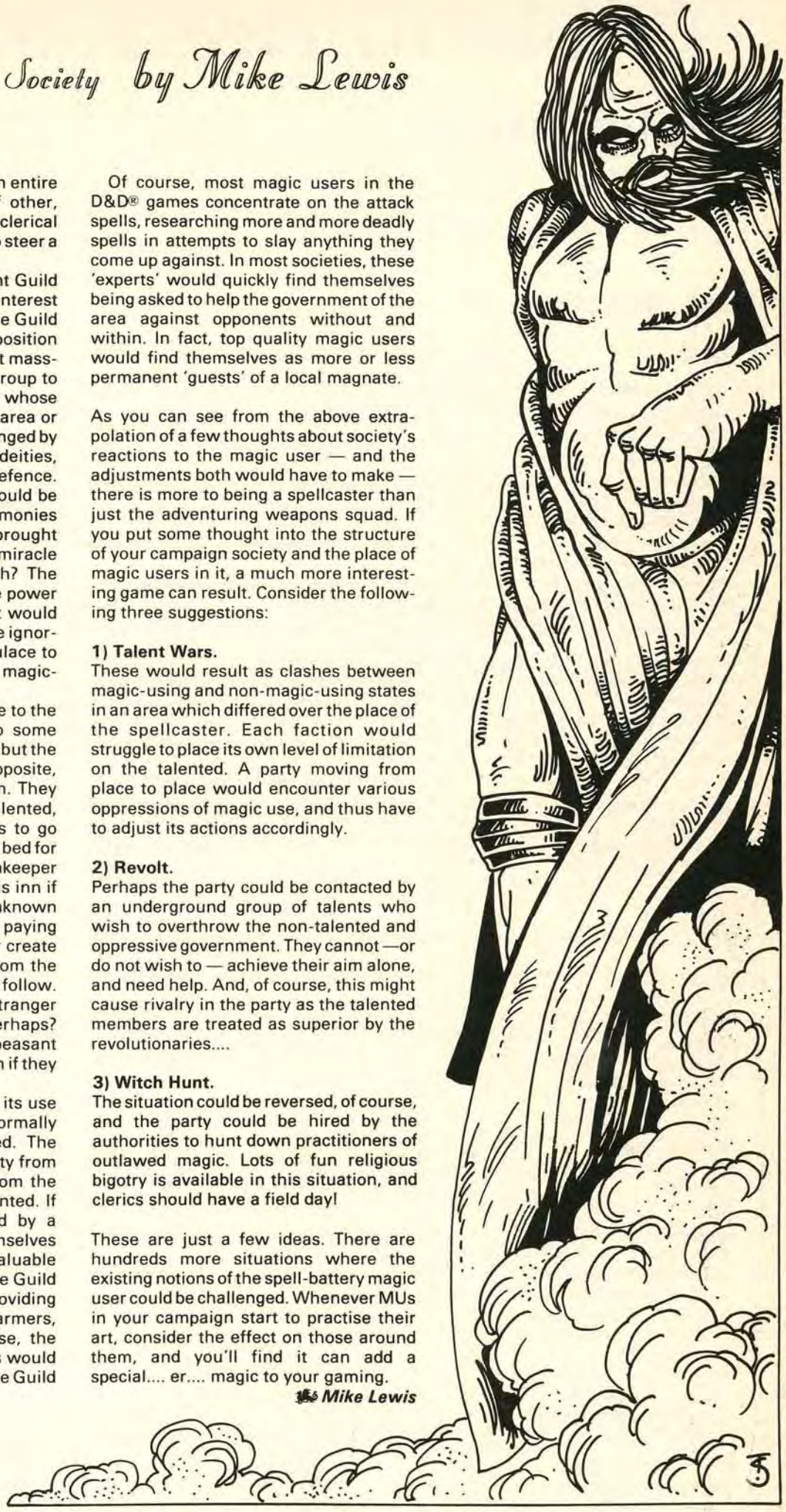
1) Talent Wars.
These would result as clashes between magic-using and non-magic-using states in an area which differed over the place of the spellcaster. Each faction would struggle to place its own level of limitation on the talented. A party moving from place to place would encounter various oppressions of magic use, and thus have to adjust its actions accordingly.

2) Revolt.
Perhaps the party could be contacted by an underground group of talents who wish to overthrow the non-talented and oppressive government. They cannot —or do not wish to — achieve their aim alone, and need help. And, of course, this might cause rivalry in the party as the talented members are treated as superior by the revolutionaries....

3) Witch Hunt.
The situation could be reversed, of course, and the party could be hired by the authorities to hunt down practitioners of outlawed magic. Lots of fun religious bigotry is available in this situation, and clerics should have a field day!

These are just a few ideas. There are hundreds more situations where the existing notions of the spell-battery magic user could be challenged. Whenever MUs in your campaign start to practise their art, consider the effect on those around them, and you'll find it can add a special.... er.... magic to your gaming.

Mike Lewis



NEW MAGIC USER SPELLS

BY GARY GYGAX

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MAGIC USER SPELLS

Lvl No	Name	Lvl	Range	Duration	Area of Effect	Components	Casting Time	Saving Throw
31	**Alarm** (Evocation)	1	1"	2-8 +1/lvl turns	Up to 20sq ft/lvl	V, S, M	1 round	None
32	**Armour** (Conjuration)	1	Touch	Special	1 creature	V, S, M	1 round	None
33	**Firewater** (Alteration)	1	1"	1 round	1 pint water/lvl	V, S, M	1 segment	None
34	**Grease** (Evocation)	1	1"	Permanent	1sq ft/lvl	V, S, M	1 segment	Special
35	**Melt** (Alteration)	1	3"	1 round/lvl	1 cubic yard/lvl	V, S, M	1 segment	Special
36	**Mount** (Conjuration/Summoning)	1	1"	12 + 6/lvl turns	1 creature	V, S, M	1 round	None
37	**Precipitation** (Alteration)	1	1"/lvl	1 segment/lvl	3" diam cylinder up to 12" high	V, S, M	1 segment	None (& Special)
38	**Run** (Enchantment)	1	Touch	5-8 hours	Special	V, S, M	1 round	None
39	**Taunt** (Enchantment)	1	3"	Instantaneous	2 lvls or HD/lvl	V, S	1 round	Negates
40	**Wizard Mark** (Alteration)	1	Touch	Permanent	1 sq ft	V, S, M	1 segment	None
25	**Bind** (Alteration/Enchantment)	2	3"	1 round/lvl	Special	V, S, M	2 segments	None
26	**Deeppockets** (Alteration/Enchantment)	2	Touch	24 +6/lvl turns	1 garment	V, S, M	1 turn	None
27	**Flaming Sphere** (Alteration/Enchantment)	2	1"	1 round/lvl	6' diameter sphere	V, S, M	2 segments	Negates
28	**Irritation** (Alteration)	2	1"/lvl	Special	1 creature	V, S, M	2 segments	Negates
29	**Melf's Acid Arrow** (Evocation)	2	3"	Special	One target	V, S, M	4 segments	Special
30	**Preserve** (Abjuration)	2	Touch	Permanent	½ cu ft/lvl	V, S, M	2 rounds	None
31	**Tasha's Uncontrollable Hideous Laughter** (Evocation)	2	5"	1 round	1 creature	V, S, M	2 segments	Special
32	**Whip** (Evocation)	2	1"	1 round/lvl	Special	V, S, M	2 segments	Special
25	**Cloudburst** (Alteration)	3	1"/lvl	1 round	3" diam cylinder up to 6" high	V, S, M	3 segments	None (& Special)
26	**Detect Illusion** (Divination)	3	Touch	2 +1 rounds/lvl	Line of sight 1" wide, 1"/lvl long	V, S, M	3 segments	None
27	**Item** (Alteration)	3	Touch	6 turns/lvl	2 cu ft/lvl	V, S, M	3 segments	Special
28	**Material** (Evocation/Conjuration)	3	1"	Permanent	1 cu ft/lvl	V, S	1 round	None
29	**Melf's Minute Meteors** (Evocation/Alteration)	3	1"/lvl	Special	1 target/missile	V, S, M	5 segments	None
30	**Secret Page** (Alteration)	3	Touch	Until dispelled	1 page, max 2 sq ft	V, S, M	1 turn	None
31	**Sepia Snake Sigil** (Conjuration/Summoning)	3	½"	Special	1 sigil	V, S, M	3 segments	None
32	**Wind Wall** (Evocation/Alteration)	3	1"/lvl	1 round/lvl	Area 1" wide, ½" high /lvl	V, S, M	3 segments	Special
25	**Dispel Illusion** (Abjuration)	4	½"/lvl	Permanent	Special	V, S	4 segments	None
26	**Evard's Black Tentacles** (Conjuration/Summoning)	4	3"	1 round/lvl	1 tentacle/lvl in 10' radius	V, S, M	8 segments	Negates
27	**Leomund's Secure Shelter** (Alteration/Enchantment)	4	2"	6 turns/lvl	30 sq ft/lvl	V, S, M	4 turns	None
28	**Magic Mirror** (Enchantment/Divination)	4	Touch	1 round/lvl	Special	V, S, M	1 hour	None
29	**Otiluke's Resiliant Sphere** (Alteration/Evocation)	4	2"	1 round/lvl	1ft diam/lvl	V, S, M	4 segments	Negates
30	**Shout** (Evocation)	4	Self	Instantaneous	1"x3" cone	V, M	1 segment	Negates
31	**Stoneskin** (Alteration)	4	Touch	Special	One creature	V, S, M	1 segment	None
32	**Ultravision** (Alteration)	4	Touch	6 +6 turns/lvl	One creature	V, S, M	4 segments	None

Editor's Note

*It has been quite some time since the **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**® game underwent development, but now that the completion of the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**® game is only one step away, the time is drawing close when Advanced players can expect to see some new ideas coming through. For now, here are a few new MU spells – designed in the days before Advanced went into a holding pattern. Look them over, let us know what you think, and drop us a line with any ideas you have which other readers might like to see.*

Spell Explanations

Alarm

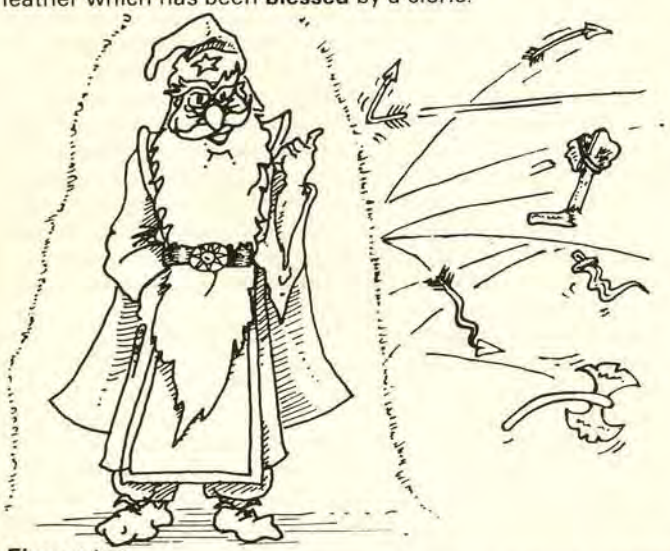
When an **alarm** is cast, the MU causes a selected area to react to the presence of any living creature larger than a rat, ie anything larger than about half a cubic foot or 3lbs weight. The area of effect can be a portal, a section of floor or stairs, etc. As soon as a living creature touches the area, the alarm will evoke a loud ringing, audible up to 60' (reduced by 10' for interposing doors, 20' for substantial walls, etc). The sound will last for one segment. Although undead and ethereal or astrally projected creatures will not cause the alarm to function, invisible creatures and those from other planes who can be considered alive will do so.

Material components are a tiny bell and a piece of very fine silver wire.

Armour

Using this spell, the MU creates a field of force which serves as if leather armour (AC 8). If cast upon someone already wearing armour, the spell has no effect. However, if cast upon a creature with an armour class normally better than 9 (due to size, speed, skin, etc), it will benefit that armour class by +1. It will not slow the recipient or hinder movement, or add to weight or encumbrance, or preventing spell casting. It lasts until dispelled, or until the wearer sustains cumulative damage greater than 8 +1 per level of the caster hit points.

Note that the spell will not function in conjunction with other magical protection devices with the exception of **ring of protection**. Material component is a piece of finely cured leather which has been **blessed** by a cleric.



Firewater

This spell changes a volume of water into a volatile, inflammable substance similar to alcohol. If exposed to a naked flame, the substance will burst into flame, doing 2-12 points of damage. The firewater will evaporate and be useless within one round of its creation, even if securely contained and sealed, so it must be utilised within 10 segments of creation. The material components are a few grains of sugar and a raisin.

Grease

A **grease** spell covers an area with a slippery substance of a greasy, fatty nature. Any creature stepping upon it should make a save vs petrification or slip. It can be cast on rope, ladder rungs, weapon grips, etc, but in these circumstances it will only work automatically if the intended object is not being wielded or used; in other cases a saving throw vs magic must fail for the spell to be effective.

The material component is a piece of pork rind, butter or some other greasy material.

Melt

By this spell, an MU raises the temperature in the area of effect. This sudden increase will melt ice in one round. If used against snow, the spell will melt an area twice the size normally obtained. Used against creatures, it is not normally effective against those not composed of para-elemental cold or which employ extreme cold. However, against such monsters as white dragons, winter wolves or yeti, the spell will inflict 2 points of damage per level of the caster, halved if a saving throw vs magic is made.

The material components are a few crystals of rock salt and a pinch of soot.

Mount

This spell allows the caster to call a normal animal to serve as a mount. The animal will serve willingly and well, but at the expiry of the spell it will seek to depart. Higher level MUs can attract a greater variety of mounts, as follows:

01011-3rd level: mule or light horse
4-7th level: draft horse or warhorse
8-12th level: camel
13th level plus: elephant

The statistics of the creature summoned are typical for creatures of that type. The material component of the spell is a bit of hair or dung from the type of creature desired.

Precipitation

When this spell is cast, all water vapour in the atmosphere in the area of effect will fall as light rain. This will continue only for as many segments as the MU has levels. The spell will have the following effects (and it should be noted that low-level casters will certainly be within the area of effect):

Thin, light material will become damp in 1 segment and thoroughly wet thereafter.

Twigs and heavy material like canvas will be damp in 2 segments and thoroughly wet thereafter.

Flat, relatively non-porous surfaces will be damp in 1 segment and filmed with water thereafter.

Semi-porous surfaces will be damp in 2 segments, and thereafter the damp will progress downward/inward; after 5 segments the surface will stay wet.

Porous surfaces will absorb the rain to their entire capacity.

Small flames, such as candles, will be extinguished by 1 segment of precipitation, and small fires will slow and become smoky for 1 round after the precipitation has ceased. Large fires will not be affected.

Note that where the temperature is above 90°F, the duration of the spell will be extended to double normal, except in areas where conditions are normally arid. Where temperature is 31-33°F, it will fall as sleet, and at 30°F and below, the precipitation will fall as rather thick snow, and most of the dampness effect will only occur when this melts. If magical heat is applied to the same area as covered by a **precipitation** spell, a cloud of warm fog will result, covering double the area of the normal spell. If magical cold is applied to the spell or the resulting water, normal ice will form. Very hot creatures such as salamanders will suffer 1 point of damage in every segment during which they are within the area of effect, taking half damage if a save vs magic is made.

The material component for the spell is a pinch of silver dust.

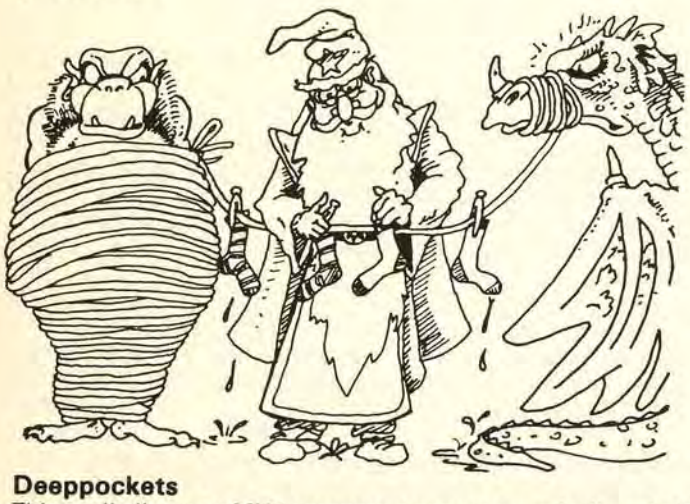
Run
A **run** spell enables the recipient to run at full speed for 5-8 hours without tiring. However, after this the individual must rest for a like number of hours, as well as drinking plenty of liquids and consuming a hearty meal. For every two levels of the caster, another individual can be affected. The material component is an elixir made from the juice of dried plums boiled in spring water and the oil of 5-8 castor plant beans.

Taunt
This spell enables the caster to give real meaning to the words and sounds then uttered, so that they will be particularly insulting to the subject. If the object(s) of these jeers fail to save vs magic, the **taunt** will drive them into a fury, and they will attack the caster if at all possible, seeking to use body weapons or hand-held weapons rather than missiles. Only one type of creature can be affected in this way, and the spell will affect those nearest to the caster first regardless of maximum range.

Wizard Mark
When this spell is cast, the user is able to inscribe, visibly or invisibly, a personal mark or rune, and up to 6 other characters of smaller size, into metal, stone or any softer substance without causing damage to the material. If an invisible mark is made, **detect magic** will cause it to glow and be readable. Likewise, **detect invisibility**, **true seeing**, **true sight**, a **gem of seeing** or a **robe of eyes** will note an invisible mark. The material components for this spell are a pinch of diamond dust (about 50gp worth) and pigment for the coloration of the mark.

Bind
Using this spell, the MU causes any rope-like object of non-living material to behave as ordered. About 50 feet + 5 feet per level of the caster of normal, one inch thick rope can be affected, and the length should be adjusted for thicker or thicker ropes, yarns, cables, etc. Possible commands are Coil; Coil and Knot; Loop; Loop and Knot; Tie and Knot and the reverse of each of the above.

The rope must be within one foot of the object to be bound. The spell does not convey any other magical properties to its subject, so bound creatures may react to the spell as if the rope were normal.



Deeppockets
This spell allows an MU to prepare a garment magically to hold far more than normal. A finely-made gown or robe (worth at least 300gp) is fashioned with at least a dozen pockets, and when the spell is then cast, one of these will then be able to hold 1,000gp weight (5 cubic feet volume) as if it were only 100gp weight. There will be no discernible bulge where the pocket is. The effect of the spell can be spread over a greater number of pockets, provided that the total capacity does not exceed the amount above. If the spell expires while the pocket is full, the contents will vanish — lost forever. In addition to the garment, a tiny golden needle and a Möbius strip of fine cloth will be required as material components.

Flaming Sphere
This spell causes a burning globe of normal fire to come into being up to 1" distant from the caster, which will then start to roll in the direction the caster points, regardless of gravity, or obstructions of less than 4 foot height. Flammable subjects will be set ablaze by contact, and creature struck will take 2-8 points of damage. Other creatures within 5' radius of the sphere's centre must save vs magic or take the indicated damage. The sphere will move at a rate of 1" per round while the caster points; staying still otherwise. It can be extinguished by any normal means.

The materials components are a bit of tallow, a pinch of sulphur and a dusting of powdered iron.

Irritation
This spell affect the epidermis of the subject creature. It will not affect creatures with very thick or insensitive skins. There are two versions, either of which can be cast from the standard preparation:

Itching — This causes the subject to feel an instant itching sensation on some portion of the body. If 5-8 segments are not immediately spent scratching the irritated area, the subject will begin to squirm and twist, effectively worsening the armour class by 4 and 'to hit' probabilities by 2.

Rash — This has no effect for 1-4 rounds, but thereafter the subject's skin will begin to break out in red welts which will itch faintly. The rash will persist until **cure disease** or **dispel magic** is cast on the subject, lowering charisma by 1 point per day for four days, and reducing the subject's dexterity by 1 after a week. Symptoms vanish once the rash is removed, all statistics returning to normal.

The material component is powdered leaf from poison ivy, oak or sumac.

Melf's Acid Arrow
With this spell an MU can create a magical 'arrow' which speeds to its target as if propelled from the bow of a fighter of the same level as the caster. The arrow is +1 for 'to hit' purposes. The hit will inflict damage on a target, even if it would not normally be damaged by a weapon of only +1 value, because of the acid. The arrow itself does 2-5 points of damage, and then the acid gushes forth to hit as the equal of 8-ounce volume (1' diameter area of effect, 2-8 damage, item saving throw). The effect of the acid increases with the level of the caster, increasing by one round of damage for every three levels above third of the caster (so a 4-6th level MUs will cause double damage over two rounds, etc) unless the acid can be neutralized.

The material components of the spell are a dart, powdered rhubarb leaf and an adder's stomach.

Preserve
A **preserve** spell allows the caster to keep an item fresh and whole until required later for a spell. It will be ineffective in retaining the potency of material such as mistletoe and holly berries, and similar stuffs which must be gathered periodically. The sort of material which can be treated depends on the level of the caster:

Hard, relatively dry material — 2-4th level
Soft, relatively dry material — 5-7th level
Semi-liquid and liquid materials — 8th level and above

A container is only necessary where the material has a high degree of moisture. The material components for this spell are a pinch of dust, a bit of resin or amber, and a drop of brandy.

Tasha's Uncontrollable Hideous Laughter

This spell causes the subject to perceive everything as hilariously funny. The effect is not immediate, and the subject will only feel a slight tingling on the round in which the spell is cast. Thereafter, the feeling will increase — and the subject will start to smile, then giggle and finally collapse laughing. Although this hysteria will only last for one round, the subject will spend the following round regaining its feet, and will be at -2 from its strength for the next two. The saving throw depends upon the creature's intelligence; those with 3 or less are totally unaffected, those with intelligence 4-8 have no saving throw; those with 9-12 save at -4; those of 13-15 save at -2; and only those with intelligence of 16+ save as normal.

The material components are a small feather, a tiny wooden paddle and a minute tort.

Whip

By means of this spell, the MU creates a material, whip-like substance up to 1" distant. The caster can then wield this by motions of the hand just as if a whip were held. The lash can be used to make a whistling crack and an actual strike each round; the sound alone is enough to keep normal animals at bay unless they save vs magic. Any animal actually struck (as indicated by a normal 'to hit' roll) must save vs magic at -1 to -4, or else slink away for at least an hour. Note that the whip does no actual damage. Creatures with intelligence above 3 are not affected, nor are animals bigger than bears, nor are fantastic beasts.

The whip can also be used in combat to wrap around an opponent's weapon. A successful 'to hit' roll must be made for the lash to have struck and wrapped itself around the weapon. If the whip then saves vs crushing blow (13 or better) when used against edged weapons, or normal blow (6 or better) against non-edged weapons, it will tear the weapon from the opponent's hand unless a saving throw vs magic succeeds. Magic bonuses of affected weapons reduce die score to save vs blows.

The material component of the spell is a piece of braided silk.

Cloudburst

By means of this spell, the caster causes the atmosphere to instantly precipitate all of its water vapour in huge drops of rain, the resulting condensation not only causing a true downburst of rain but also sucking more vapour into the area to fall thereafter. This cloudburst will effectively drench everything within its area of effect within 1 segment. All normal fires will be extinguished — small ones instantly, medium ones in 3-5 segments, large ones in 8-10 segments. Magical fires will also be extinguished — permanent magical fires will relight after 1-2 rounds; small rekindlable fires such as that of a **flame tongue** sword will be affected only during the actual cloudburst; spells such as **produce fire** and **burning hands** will be negated. Large area spells such as **fireball**, **flame strike** or **wall of fire** will, in the course of being extinguished, vaporize the rain, creating a cloud of steam of quadruple area of effect. The steam will inflict 1-3 points of damage on normal creatures, and double damage on cold-dwelling or cold-using creatures. It will persist for 2-5 rounds, or less if a wind is blowing.

In arid regions, the cloudburst will act only as a double-strength **precipitation spell**. In hot and humid areas, the duration of the spell will be extended to 2 rounds. In areas with a temperature of 31-33°F, sleet rather than rain will fall, with ice and slush forming where it accumulates. In temperatures of 30°F or lower, the cloudburst will be a snowburst, with one inch of snow falling each segment. However it falls, the cloudburst will cause very hot creatures to suffer 10+1 per segment points of damage, unless a save vs magic is made.

The material components for the spell are powdered silver and powdered iodine crystals.

Detect Illusion

This spell is exactly the same as the 1st level illusionist spell **detect illusion** (**PH** p94) except with regard to duration, as shown above.

Item

By means of this spell, an MU is able to touch any normal, non-magical item of a size appropriate to the area of effect and cause it to shrink to one-twelfth its normal size. Optionally, the caster can also change its now shrunken composition to a cloth-like one. Only living things are entitled to a saving throw vs magic, made at +4. When cast on non-living material, the spell's duration should be quadrupled.

Objects changed by an **item** spell can be returned to their natural composition and size by tossing them onto any solid surface or by word of command from the original caster.

Material

A **material** spell allows an MU to bring into being certain common things. There is no great difficulty in causing common basic materials such as stone, earth or wood to appear. Similarly, other inorganic or non-living materials such as water, air, dung, straw, etc can be conjured.

When simple plants are concerned, such as when a caster attempts to create an area of grass, there is a base 100% chance of failure, modified downward by 1% per level of the caster. Animal life can never be affected by this spell. In no event can worked, refined or fabricated items be brought into being by a **material** spell.

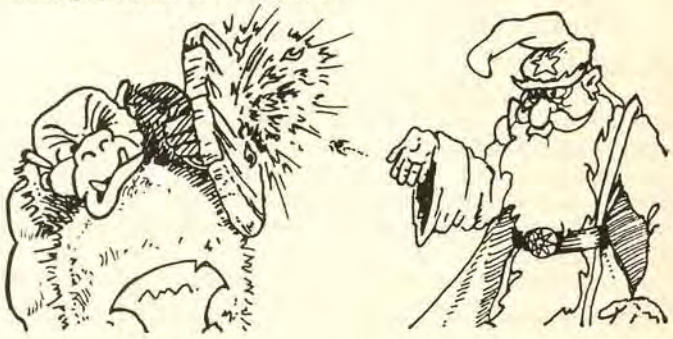
Melf's Minute Meteors

This spell is unusual in two respects. First, the dweomer enables the caster to create small globes of fire which burst into a 1ft diameter sphere on impact, inflicting 1-4 points of damage upon the target creature — or otherwise igniting combustible materials (even solid planks). This ability continues from round to round until the caster has fired off as many of these meteors as he or she has levels of experience, until the caster decides to forego casting any remaining meteors or until a **dispel magic** is successfully cast upon the MU. Second, once **Melf's minute meteors** has been cast, the MU has the option to discharge the available missiles at the rate of one every two segments, or one every round (beginning with the initial round of casting).

In the first option, the caster must be pointing at the desired target on the second segment after the spell is cast and a missile will be discharged. This process is repeated every two segments thereafter until all the missiles are released. Naturally, this will mean that the spell actually carries over into the next round, at least.

If the second option is chosen, the MU can withhold or discharge missiles as seems fit. This option also has the benefit of enabling the spellcaster to actually discharge one of the meteors and conjure some other spell as well. This additional spell must be of such a nature as to not require the the continuing concentration of the spellcaster, or else the remaining meteors are lost. However, considering that the MU will have been able to discharge a missile and cast another spell in the same round is of such benefit that the potential loss is a small concern.

The components necessary for the casting of this spell are nitre and sulphur formed into a bead by the admixture of pine tar, and a small hollow tube of minute proportion, fashioned from gold. This tube should cost no less than 1,000gp to construct, with fine workmanship and magical engraving, but it will remain potent through repeated castings of the spell unless damaged by accident or abuse.



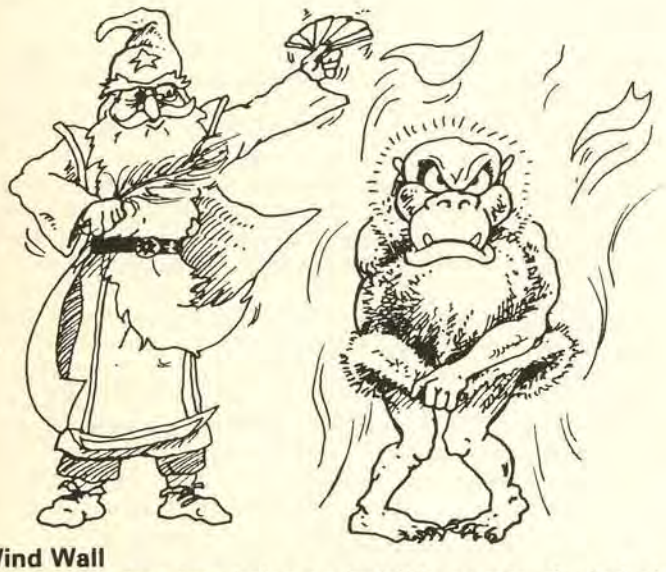
Secret Page
When cast, a **secret page** spell alters the perceived contents of a page so that they appear to be entirely different. Thus, a map can be changed to become a treatise on burnishing ebony walking sticks, and so on. The caster can reverse the spell by uttering a command word, peruse the page's actual contents, and return it to its altered form thereafter. The caster can also remove the spell by a repetition of the command word. Others noting the dim magic of a page cloaked by this spell can attempt a **dispel magic**, but if it fails the page will be destroyed. Otherwise, short of an **alter reality** or **wish spell**, only **will-o-the-wisp essence** will reveal the true nature of a page. The material component for the spell is powdered herring scales.

Sepia Snake Sigil
There are three forms of this spell. Each eventually causes the conjuration of a deep brown snake-like force. This so-called sepia snake springs into being and strikes at the nearest living creature, attacking as if it were a monster with hit dice equal to the level of the caster. If successful, its strike engulfs the victim in a shimmering amber field of force, frozen and immobilized until the caster releases the dweomer, or until a **dispel magic** is cast. Until then, nothing can get at the victim, move the shimmering force surrounding him or her, or otherwise affect either the field or its victim. If the sepia snake misses its target, it dissipates in a flash of brown light, with a loud noise and a puff of dun-coloured smoke which is 1" in diameter and lasts for 1 round.

The three applications are: 1) as a glowing sigil in the air drawn by the spellcaster and pointed at the intended target; 2) as a glyph of umber marked on a surface; or 3) as a small character marked upon some magic work to protect it.

The components or the spell are 100gp worth of powdered amber, a scale from any snake, and a pinch of mushroom spores.

Dispel Illusion
This spell is the same as the 3rd-level illusionist spell of the same name. However, the MU attempting to dispel the illusion is considered as two levels below his or her actual level with respect to illusion-phantasm types of spells cast by an illusionist.



Wind Wall
This spell brings into being an invisible curtain of wind of considerable strength — sufficient to blow birds as large as crows upward, or to tear papers and like materials from unsuspecting hands (if in doubt, a saving throw vs magic determines grasp). Normal insects cannot pass through such a barrier. Loose material, even garments, caught in a **wind wall** will fly upwards.

The material components are a tiny fan and a feather of exotic origin.

Evard's Black Tentacles
By means of this spell, the caster creates many rubbery, black tentacles in the area of effect. These waving members seem to spring forth from whatever surface is underfoot — even water. Each is 10' long, AC4 and takes as many points to destroy as the casting MU has levels. Furthermore, there will be one such tentacle for each level. Any creature within the reach of the tentacles is subject to attack, and must make a saving throw vs magic. If this succeeds, the victim takes 1-4 points of damage from initial contact with the tentacle, but this is then destroyed. If the saving throw is failed, this indicates that the damage inflicted is 2-8 points, that the member is wrapped around its victim, and that damage will be 3-12 points on succeeding rounds.

As these tentacles have no intelligence to guide them, there is the possibility that they will entwine any object — a tree, for example — or continue to squeeze a dead opponent. Once grasped, a tentacle remains around its chosen target until the thing is destroyed by some form of attack or it disappears due to expiry of the spell.

The material component for this spell is a piece of tentacle from a giant octopus or squid.

Leomund's Secure Shelter
This spell enables the MU to call into being a sturdy cottage or lodge, made of a material which is common in the area where the spell is cast. The floor area will be 30 square feet per level of the caster, and the surface will be clean, level and dry. While the lodging is secure against winds of up to 70mph, it has no heating or cooling source other than natural insulation properties of the materials.

The dwelling will provide considerable security, as it will be as strong as an equivalent stone building no matter of what it is made, it will **resist fire** as if it were stone, and be impervious to all missiles except those cast by artillery or giants. The door, shutters and chimney are secure against intrusion, the former two being **wizard locked** and the latter secured by a top grate of iron and a narrow flue. In addition, all such areas will be covered by an **alarm** spell, and an **unseen servant** is called up to provide service to the spell caster.

The inside of the shelter will contain rude furnishings as desired by the spell caster made of a material common to the area — up to 8 bunks, a trestle table and benches, as many as 4 chairs or 8 stools, and a writing desk.

The material components are a square chip of stone, crushed lime, a few grains of sand, a sprinkling of water and several splinters of wood, and these must be augmented by the components of the **alarm** and **unseen servant** spells.

Magic Mirror
By means of this spell, an MU changes a normal mirror into a scrying device similar to a **crystal ball**. The details of such a scrying device are given in the **DMG**, Miscellaneous Magic Items section, under **crystal ball**.

The mirror must be of finely wrought and highly polished silver, of a minimum cost of at least 1,000gp. The mirror is not harmed by the casting of this spell as are the other materials components — the eye of a hawk, eagle or even a roc, nitric acid, copper and zinc.

Otiluke's Resilient Sphere
When this spell is cast, the result is a globe of shimmering force which encapsulates the subject, provided that it is small enough to fit within the diameter of the sphere and fails a saving throw against magic.

The resilient sphere will contain its subject for as long as the dweomer persists, and it is not subject to damage of any sort except from a **rod of cancellation**, **wand of negation**, or a **disintegrate** or **dispel magic** spell. These will destroy the sphere without harming the occupant.

The material components of this spell are a hemispherical piece of diamond or similar hard, clear gem and a matching sphere of gum arabic.

Shout

When a **shout** spell is cast, the MU is empowered with tremendous vocal strength. The caster will release an ear-splitting noise which has a principal effect in a cone shape radiating from the mouth of the caster to a 3" terminus. Any creature within this range will be deafened for 2-12 rounds and take a like amount of damage. Any brittle or similar substance subject to sonic vibrations will be shattered — even a **wall of ice**. A spell of this nature can be employed but once a day, for otherwise the caster might be permanently deafened.

The material components are a drop of honey, a drop of citric acid and a small cone made from a bull's or a ram's horn.

Stoneskin

When this spell is cast, the affected creature gains a virtual immunity to any attack by cut, blow or projectile. Even a **sword of sharpness** would not affect a creature protected in this way, nor would a rock hurled by a giant or a snake's strike. However, magic attacks from spells such as **fireball, magic missile** and so on would have their normal effect. Further, any attack or attack sequence dispels the dweomer — thus it is proof only against one attack of this nature. Attacks with relatively soft weapons, such as a monk's hand attack, or an ogrillon's fist, will inflict 1-2 points of damage on the attacker.

The material components for the spell are granite and diamond dust sprinkled on the skin.

Ultravision

This spell empowers the recipient to see radiation in the ultraviolet spectrum. In night conditions this means that vision will be clear, as if it were daylight, to a range of 100 yards, and shadowy and indistinct for a further 200 yards beyond that. If the night is very dark, with thick clouds, reduce the distances by 50%. Where more than six feet of earth or three feet of stone interpose between the sky and the recipient, vison of only the dimmest sort will be possible in a 3-foot radius. Nearby light tends to spoil ultravision. The material component is a crushed amethyst of at least 500gp value.

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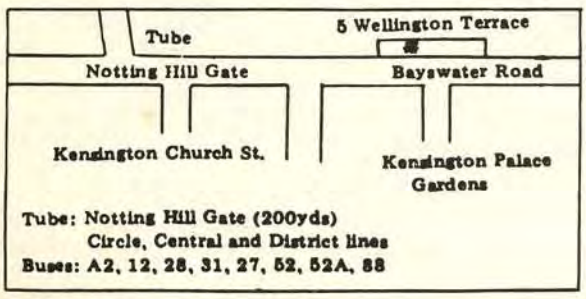

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A rationale for the magic system in the D&D® game

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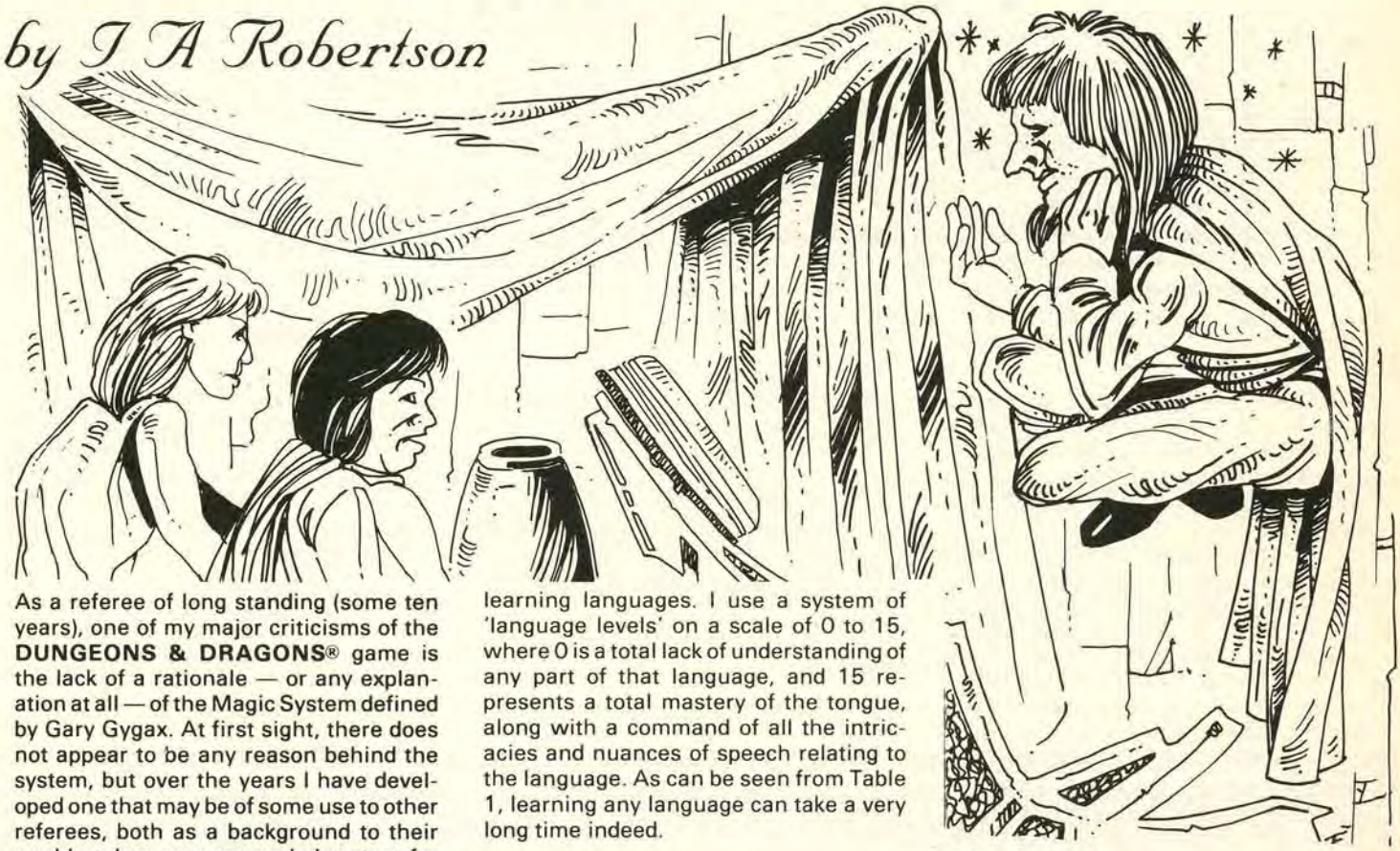


As a referee of long standing (some ten years), one of my major criticisms of the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game is the lack of a rationale — or any explanation at all — of the Magic System defined by Gary Gygax. At first sight, there does not appear to be any reason behind the system, but over the years I have developed one that may be of some use to other referees, both as a background to their world and as an open-ended system for the development of new spells and magical items.

What I am not trying to do is to lay down any hard and fast rules; I am merely describing my system, and other people are to feel free to take it, modify it, and use such parts as suits them; it is up to DMs to take the game and to use it as they wish.

1. The Historical Background

At the time of creation, there was an utterance of a single, very complex name by the prime creative force which described in absolute detail all that the world was, contained and ever would contain, then or at any point in time thereafter.

Since that time, men have learnt that, by using the various parts of that name which describe an object, ie its True Name, that object can be affected by supernatural means (or magically, to use a different word). They also discovered that the True Name of an object related to the complexity of that object, and that it was unique for each object.

2. System Requirements

In order to use the system, which will introduce the concept of a magical 'tongue', it will help if there is a method of learning languages. I use a system of 'language levels' on a scale of 0 to 15, where 0 is a total lack of understanding of any part of that language, and 15 represents a total mastery of the tongue, along with a command of all the intricacies and nuances of speech relating to the language. As can be seen from Table 1, learning any language can take a very long time indeed.

Table 1: Language levels

Language Level (LL)	Time to learn	Notes
0		No knowledge
1	2 weeks	Only very
2	4 weeks	simple phrases
3	8 weeks	eg *me hungry*
4	3 months	Recognisable
5	6 months	as foreign
6	1 year	
7	2 years	Normal native
8	3 years	fluency of speech
9	4 years	'BBC' newsreader
10	5 years	command of tongue
11	Variable as	Tutor must be at
12	dependent on	least 1 LL higher
13	tutor's ability	than the level
14	but at least	he is tutoring
15	5 years	

Notes on Table 1

1) The time given assumes 3 hours per day spent learning the language, assuming a reasonable tutor is available.

2) The times given are not cumulative; ie it takes 3 months to go from LL3 to LL4, and then another 6 months to reach LL5.

Magic Use

During the early stages of their career, magic users (MUs) learn spells by rote, from a mentor, or from 'teaching scrolls' (a non-magical type of scroll containing very precise instructions on how to cast a spell — these would be very much more common than 'casting scrolls', ie the scrolls as in the **DMG**.

As their experience of spell casting increases, MUs begin to realise that there is a language behind spell casting, the 'True Names' being used become more familiar and MUs begin to develop a basic knowledge of True Speech. I represent this by giving the MU LL1 in True Speech on reaching 4th level.

At this stage, MUs can follow two paths; they can either develop their power and strength by gaining experience points and increasing character level, or they can develop their knowledge of True Speech which, although the level stays lower, makes known spells, albeit low level ones, vastly more efficient (in system terms, the opponent's saving throw increases, and the MU's saving throw decreases, which means that spells thrown at the MU are more difficult to 'target' and his/her spells are more effective).

The modifiers I use are as described in Table 2 (see over).

Table 2: Saving Throw Adjustments for True Speech Knowledge

Speech LL of Target \ True Speech LL of Caster	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
0	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5	-6	-6	-6	-6	-7	-7	-7
1	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5	-6	-6	-6	-6	-7	-7
2	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5	-6	-6	-6	-6	-7
3	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5	-6	-6	-6	-6
4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5	-6	-6	-6
5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5	-6	-6
6	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5	-6
7	+5	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5
8	+5	+5	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5
9	+6	+5	+5	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5
10	+6	+6	+5	+5	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4
11	+6	+6	+6	+5	+5	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4
12	+6	+6	+6	+6	+5	+5	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3
13	+7	+6	+6	+6	+6	+5	+5	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
14	+7	+7	+6	+6	+6	+6	+5	+5	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1
15	+7	+7	+7	+6	+6	+6	+6	+5	+5	+5	+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	0

However, there is a snag. No human teacher can ever educate a human to higher than LL10 in True Speech, which means that the MU must go out and find creatures to which True Speech is a natural tongue.

These creatures are the dragons, much more formidable creatures than under the standard rules because they have an inherent LL15 in True Speech, which means that their spells are very much more dangerous. So the MU must first of all find a dragon, and then see if it will talk. Normally there are only two possible outcomes to this; either the dragon and the MU converse, or the MU gets an instant transformation into something else (eg a large pile of ash) courtesy of the dragon.

Even if magic users follow the normal experience points/level path, they will still have to learn some True Speech as they go along, in order that the higher level spells may be cast: see Table 3.

Table 3: LL of True Speech required by MU to Cast Spell

Spell level	Minimum LL
4	4
5	6
6	8
7	10
8	12
9	14

Thus this concept explains why MUs must have a high intelligence — in order to cast 7th, 8th or 9th level spells, they must have a good command of True Speech.

One ramification of this system is that some spells can be more easily (and justifiably) restricted if the referee so desires, for example **sleep** could in one version only affect orcs, or humanoids etc.

It also gives comparatively low-level MUs a way to improve casting and magical defence abilities such that they are rather more powerful — particularly useful for an NPC magic user. (Under this system I've seen a seventeenth level illusionist tremble when a fifth level MU raised an eyebrow — the MU had LL14 True Speech, the illusionist only LL9.)

It also allows the possibility of non-MU characters learning one or two spells if they wish to, and can find someone prepared to teach them.

Clerics

Clerics gets magic through the effects of their deities. This is even more applicable as a cleric starts casting higher level magic. I treat spells of first and second level the same as for an MU, that is as the result of training and learning by rote the necessary rituals to cast the spells.

According to the DMG, the clerical spells of third level upwards are cast by intervention of the cleric's deity or the deity's minions (supernatural servants). My concept of this is that the cleric is granted the power to 'speak in tongues' (specifically in True Speech) but without gaining the understanding of what is being said. This suggests that clerics should not have to select spells prior to adventuring; they only need to pray for the ability to cast the spell. This clears the problem that the cleric's deity might allow the wrong spells for the adventure to be selected (deities are supposed to be omnipotent) and allows the DM to modify or even to refuse the spell should the cleric have upset or been unfaithful to the deity.

Other Magic-Using Classes

1) Paladins
In many respects a paladin, when reaching a level high enough to cast spells, may be considered as a low-level cleric, with the difference that he always 'speaks in tongues'.

2) Druids
Again, druids can be treated as clerics who worship a nature deity, and can therefore be considered as clerics under this system.

3) Rangers
My concept of a ranger is that of a fighter who is more attuned to the nature deities than most normal fighters. Because of this, rangers are looked on with favour by these deities, who will occasionally grant him the power to cast druidic type spells as a paladin will cast clerical spells

Owing to their wanderings, rangers will pick up odd snippets of other languages, and these may well include True Speech, which would allow them to cast some low-level MU spells as well.

4) Illusionists
An illusionist is an MU who specialises in spells affecting the mind and can therefore be treated exactly as any other magic user is treated.

Magical Items

Magical items can be considered in three parts, namely the creation of an item, its use, and finally the de-activation or destruction of an item. It has been necessary to include another spell to allow the creation of an item by the alteration of its True Name (**prepare enchantment**).

1) Creation of an Item
My notion of a magical item is an object which has had its True Name altered by magical (or other) means. The requirements to perform such an enchantment are several.

The first is that the mage must find the True Name for the article that he desires to create. Note that this name is unique for each item; even two **swords +1** will have different True Names, although they may be related in some way (this could make it easier to find the True Name for a subsequent item of the same type).

This implies that a mage cannot start mass-producing magical items — a good thing as it can imbalance a world terribly; and that the DM can regulate the time needed to research the True Name (which becomes more complex as the item does so) dependent on the mage's command of True Speech, and how the item would fit within the game. As a guide, an MU with access to a good library might take as much as six months' research to find a true name for a **sword +1**, and maybe five or ten years to find a name for a holy **sword +5** with flaming powers, telepathy and intelligence.

The mage must then actually force this name onto the item being enchanted, which may require rare and exotic material components for the **prepare enchantment** spell, which the mage will obviously have to find.

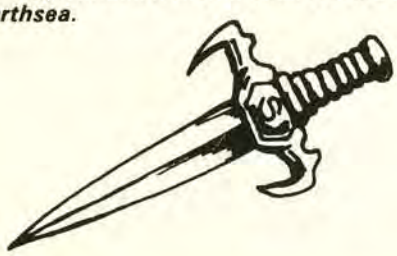
Note that it is exceptionally difficult to enchant either cold iron or steel. I allow magical weapons to be made of bronze (with -1 to damage and a 10% chance of breakage per use) or if the MU thinks of it, either **enchanted weapon** or **enchant an item** may be cast on the metal first, in which case I treat it as 'natural material' in evaluating the spell's effect.

2) The Use of Magical Items
In my game, the command word(s), where required, are included as part of the True Name of the item, as can be the number of charges on a wand or similar. Again, the more changes, the more complex the True Name will become, as the item has to be more complex magically in order to store the power required.

3) The Destruction of Magical Items
In order to destroy an item, the MU must discover its True Name and then cast a **destroy enchantment** spell (the reverse of **prepare enchantment**). Various means can be used to discover the True Name of an item, eg **legend lore** and **identify** spells, in addition to research. Note that all materials are treated as 'natural' for this spell. It is easier to destroy something than to create it!

I A Robertson

I would like to thank all those who have aided me in the development of this rationale, and also Ursula K Le Guin for the original idea from her book ***Wizard of Earthsea.***



NEW SPELL NEW SPELL

Prepare Enchantment (Conjuration/Evocation)
Reversible
Level: *6th for MU, 5th Cleric, Illusionist, Druid*
Range: *touch*
Duration: *permanent*
Area of Effect: *special*
Components: *V, S, M*
Casting Time: *Special*
Saving Throw: *See description*

Explanation/Description: This spell is used to enchant an item by forcing the alteration of its True Name. The caster must know the True Name of the item to be created, which varies in complexity according to the complexity of the item.

Immediately prior to casting the spell, he must ritually purify himself, by fasting, etc. The ritual takes six days to prepare and one to cast, but the resultant drain on the caster is such that it will be impossible for them to cast any other spell for the following d100 days, and in addition there is the chance of taking mental damage.

After the spell has been cast there is a chance that the item will have had its True Name altered. The base chance is 60% with the following modifiers:

-1% per 10gp weight of natural material (wood, leather)
-1% per 3gp weight of other non-ferrous material
-1% per 1gp weight of ferrous material
+1% per level of caster
+1% per day of fasting prior to casting the spell.
+1% per 10,000gp worth of material components

After casting the spell the caster must save vs **feeblemind** (at +3 if the spell was successful) or be feebleminded (see 5th level druidic or 6th level MU spell). If the caster saves against feeblemind, s/he is then magically drained for d100 days, regardless of whether or not the spell was successful.

The material components will vary according to the item that is to be enchanted, for their existence will be revealed to the caster as part of the True Name of the item. However, they should be of at least 5,000gp value. The materials will be lost if the spell fails, or will become a part of the item if it succeeds.

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PELINORE

The County of Cerwyn: BURGHALTER

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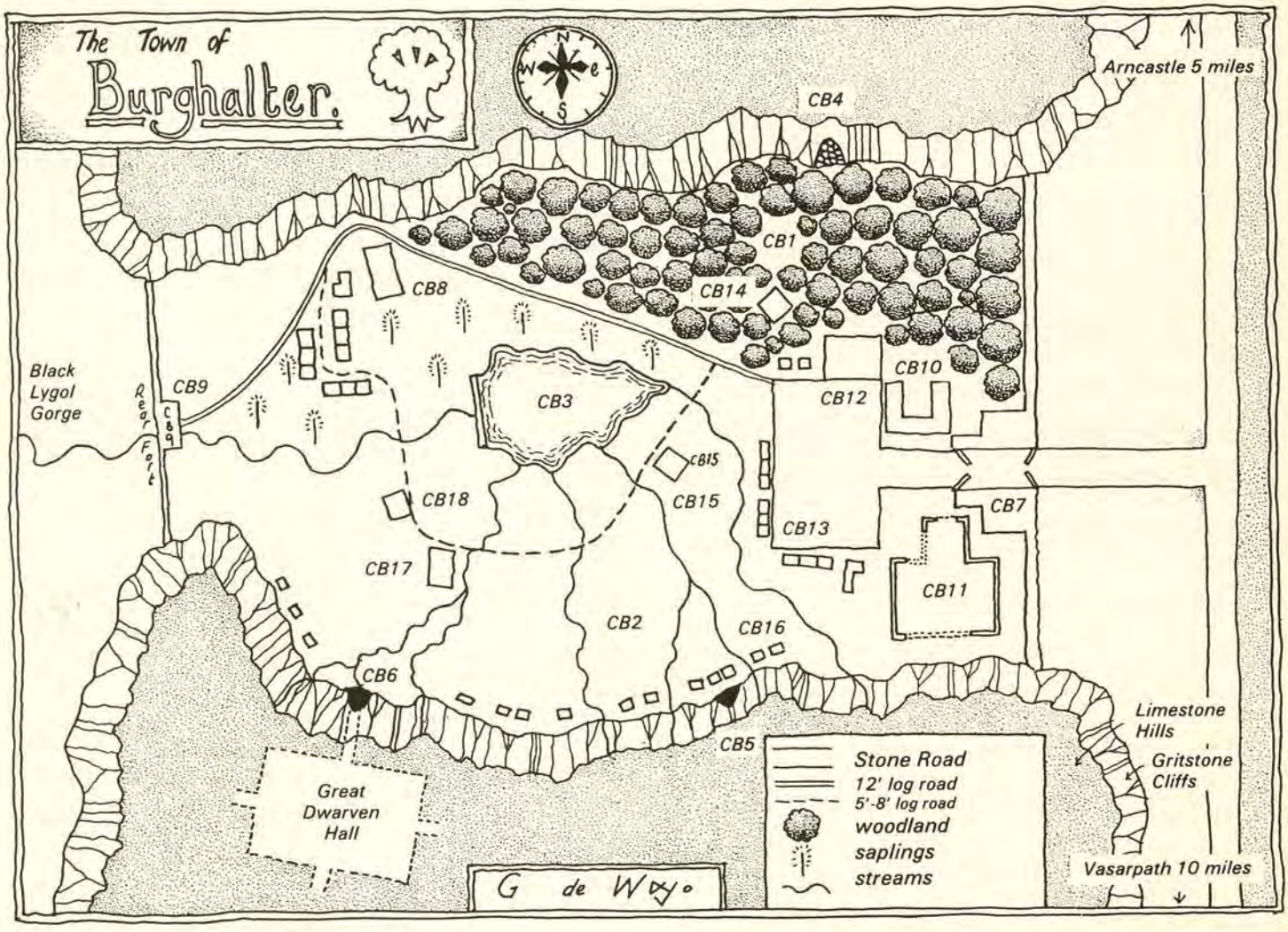

by Chris Felton

History

1283 years ago: The valley was colonised by dwarves. Defensive walls were built and the dwarves began diggings in the hard gritstones.

137 years ago: The dwarves sold Burghalter to a human merchant after a phyrric victory in the Sarpath Mountains depleted their numbers. The merchant sealed up the caverns and built an inn. The property changed hands on five occasions in the next forty years.

96 years ago: The Burghalter Inn was destroyed by giants, acting as mercenaries for a third party, who also cut off all traffic along the Arncastle-Vasarpath road. One year later the giants' contract was completed and they moved on, and at some stage in the next three or four years, Burghalter was taken over by a dark and evil Rakshasa cult. They re-opened the caverns with humanoid slave labour and extended them into a major complex over the next decade, finding traces of ancient workings below the surface of the valley.

8 years ago: Jelima Ganz, a good priestess of Amaras in the County of Bereduth, was kidnapped, transported to Burghalter and sacrificed.

7 years ago: Jelima's husband, Varlin, and his adventuring colleagues destroyed the Cult in a mission of vengeance. The Cult Temple was razed and the caverns cleared. Varlin decided to set up permanent residence here and re-named the village Jelima.

6 years ago: Varlin and a cleric named Solem consecrated the former Great Hall of the Dwarves as a temple. The community expanded as halfling farmers arrived, and a new inn was opened on the original site to replace the one which was destroyed. The old quarry was screened from the rest of the valley by trees.

3 years ago: A silvery mallorn sapling was found in the northern half of the valley. 30 Elves, to whom the mallorn is sacred, leased the land from Varlin and his adventuring colleagues.

6 months ago: Varlin and Solem commenced work on a new temple.

DM's Notes: *The new name of the village, Jelima, has not stuck among the population of Cerwyn as a whole; the DM should only describe the village thus when the PCs are actually present there. Note also that the details of the Rakshasa Cult should not be made known to the players, who should instead be informed of the popular belief that the giants were defeated by Varlin. There is ample opportunity for the players to discover the remnants of this cult if they choose to explore the caverns.*

The Valley

The valley lies among the foothills of the Sarpath Mountains, between the Vasarpath-Arncastle road and the Black Lygol River gorge. The sides of the valley are steep but by no means unclimbable by unarmoured characters.

The woodland is mostly oak and ash, and the soil is well drained by a network of rivulets and the drainage schemes of the halfling farmers. The roads are log roads, 5-8 feet wide, except for the road from the entrance to the Rear Fort, which is 12 feet wide.

CB1 The Woods: These cover the valley on the western side. Here live 30 adult Elves, tending the mallorn at the centre of the site.

CB1a Lagonitурel; Elven Priest;
M; C7; N/CG; hp 27/34; Ch 16
Lagonitурel is the only elf regularly seen by the rest of the community of Burghalter, as he buys their food and arranges whatever else they need. No-one outside of the elves knows the set-up in the woods; in fact Lagonitурel and his fellows receive a regular secret donation of silver from an outside source to maintain the mallorn and to be ready to take over the valley should the humans ever choose to leave. It would be a matter of great concern to the elves if human habitation were greatly extended in the valley.

CB2 Farmland: The halflings have cleared the woodland and now have good, fertile soil producing abundant goods under their care.

CB3 The Lake: A dwarf-built dam pens the many streams through the valley and the resulting lake has been stocked with fish.

CB4 Sealed Tunnel Entrance: Leads to the underground complex, but has been sealed by a solid stone wall.

CB5 Northern Tunnel Entrance: The trees cut from the southern end of the valley are stored here, cut to mature for the roof of the new temple. Beyond, the tunnels are sealed with stone walls.

CB6 Southern Tunnel Entrance: Many of the areas behind this entrance were in use as dwelling placs while homes were being constructed. Two people still live here. Immediately behind the entrance is the former Dwarven Great Hall, now a temple to Tarmenel (see **IMAGINE** magazine, #26)

CB6a Reeni Tayar; Priestess;
F; C5; N/CG; hp 21/27
Reeni looks after the underground temple and handles routine services while Solem sees to the building of the new temple. She is popular and well-known throughout Burghalter, and is married to the quarry foreman, Latel.

CB6b Latel Tayar; Quarry Foreman;
M; Fr2; N/NG; hp 8
Latel is a Bereduthan, and deeply suspicious of those citizens of Burghalter who hail from other lands.

The Village

CB7 Gatehouse: Ten F1-2 mercenaries on long-term contracts watch the main entrance to the valley. They wear chain, and carry shields, shortbows and broadswords.

CB8 Quarry Barracks: Five F1-2 mercenaries watch over the quarry. They can be alerted from the Rear Fort in time of danger. They are armed as above (**CB7**).

CB9 Rear Fort: Five F1-2 mercenaries watch the Black Lygol gorge from here. The narrow gate guards a flimsy drawbridge. The stream from the valley flows through an iron grille.

CB10 Burghalter Inn: The Inn has high-quality rooms for merchants and other passers-by at 3gp per night, and common rooms for guards, teamsters, etc at 5sp a night.

CB10a Megart Jonniker; Inn Manager;
M; Fr 3; N; hp 9
Megart is the third son of a noble who was implicated in a plot against the Katar of the City League by the Knights Ocular, but who was lynched by a mob before his trial. Megart and his brothers were stripped of titles and wealth and exiled. He came to Burghalter by chance, and agreed to work for Varlin — purely because, as a Bereduthan, Varlin was unlikely to care a fig for the justice of the City League. He hopes to raise some money to clear his father's name — and is fiddling the books. His birthright makes him rather aloof.

CB10b Falli; Chambermaid
F; FO/NM; hp 3;
Falli is attractive but very withdrawn. She alone knows all about Megart, including his thefts, but she is in love with him and says nothing. As one of only two unattached women in the valley (the other is one of the mercenary guards), Falli attracts plenty of attention from the guards and others, although she rejects them all.

CB11 Temple under construction: The vaults and foundations have been excavated and work is in progress on the walls. This temple will be dedicated to Tarmenel. It is impressive enough already to hint at great wealth.

CB12 Stables: There is room for up to 40 horses, although only two berths will be occupied. The standard charge is 4sp per night, but Yarred can spot adventurers a mile off and hikes the price up to 2gp.

CB12a 'No-nose' Yarred; Teamster, Stable Manager;
M; Fr 1; N; hp 4
Wears leathers and carries a whip.
Yarred is an old horseman who lost the tip of his nose to a warhorse. He claims to have been raised by pegasi, though most people scoff; however, he is very capable of raising and training pegasi, and would do so at a considerably cheaper price than some big-city trainer. Yarred is normally out in the daytime taking stones from the quarry to the new temple in an old wagon.

CB13 Workers' Houses: The large house in each group is a communal dwelling for unmarried men. Varlin and the others have failed to recruit many married workers; consequently, after being paid the men often go off to Arncastle, where they are becoming known as a rowdy nuisance.

CB14 Solem's House: Endor and Castillo Solem's home is set back amongst the trees. Endor is a central figure in Burghalter, and his wife Castillo is a qualified engineer who is supervising his grandiose plans for the temple. She is, however, house-bound after an accident that has left her crippled, and is very unlikely to be encountered by PCs, even if they call at the Solem household.

CB14a Endor Solem; Cleric adventurer (part-retired)
M; C10; N/CG; hp 51/61; W 17, C 15, Ch 16
Wears strangely-cut, old grey suit — a unique magical item which becomes **plate mail +2** when a command word is spoken. Also has (Basic: **ring of protection +1**; Advanced: **cloak of protection +1**). Uses **flail +3** if expecting trouble, **staff +1** otherwise. Also owns (Basic: **wand of cold** (20 charges), **flying carpet**, **ointment of soothing**; Advanced: **wand of magic missiles** (34 charges), **carpet of flying**, 6 pots of **Nolzur's Marvellous Pigments**), various scrolls and potions of his own making, and a special salve that inhibits a person's scent for 2-8 hours. Usually has curative, defensive and at least one high level offensive spell memorised.
Endor Solem is aloof to strangers, allowing only his truest friends to see his sensitive real self. Still enjoys battle-practice, but his burning ambition is to see the temple completed — it has cost him nearly every gp he ever had.

CB15 Ganz' House: An effusive house; open and cheerful to suit the owner. Varlin still has some adventuring wealth about the place, although he spends it quickly. One secret panel contains his dead wife's jewels (10 pieces, total value 30,000gp), another contains a bag of diamond dust (value 1500gp) and Bereduthan coin to the value of 14,000gp. The panels are trapped with (Basic: an explosive trap doing 1-8 damage; Advanced: **glyphs of warding**). Wages for the temple construction workers are kept in a locked chest, and consist of 1200gp in silver and gold coin. A book in the chest shows that there should be 3200gp present, but 3000gp was stolen from this chest recently, and Varlin has been able to replace just 1000gp from his own resources.

CB15a Varlin Ganz; Cleric adventurer
M; C9; N/CG; hp 37/44; W 16
Wears clerical robes or **plate mail +1**. Uses horseman's mace or **club +1**. Also owns **boots of levitation**, **rod of cancellation**, **potion of speed**, scroll of **remove curse**, **raise dead**, (Basic: **purify food and water**, **cureall**; Advanced: **purify food and drink**, **heal**).
Normally has curative and offensive spells memorised.
Although a spendthrift and a happy-go-lucky type, Varlin's nature is clouded by the obsession he has with turning Burghalter into a monument for his lost wife. He still goes out adventuring, and might join a suitable party of PCs if approached. However, he has something of a hidden deathwish, and might prove to be as much of a liability as a help. Something which some people might find odd is that Varlin — and not Endor Solem — runs Burghalter, despite the fact that Solem is of a higher rank in the church of Tarmanel. This is because Endor considers 'civic' work beneath him and has 'delegated' the responsibility.

CB16 Halfling Homes: These dwellings are burrowed into the hillsides, and provide homes for the young halfling community who farm the southern half of the valley.

CB16a Cholorodeny; Farmer (thief);
M; T4; N/CN; I 17, hp 10
Cholorodeny (pronounced 'Chordeny' around the village) is a member of a Thieves' Guild based in the New City area of the City League, placed here to report on events around the valley, particularly on the arrival of religious relics for the new temple. He has one spectacular theft to his credit — he recently removed 3000gp from Varlin's home which the adventurer has never announced as stolen.... The money is buried behind his home.

CB17 Byloff's House; a plain building with a slender tower. Tobek and Lana's 6 children can normally be seen playing outside.

CB17a Tobek Byloff; Fighter adventurer
M; F8; N/CG; S 15; hp 32/40
Wears lots of frills, lace and bright colours — or grim **plate mail +2**. Carries **shield +1**. Normally armed with **bastard sword +3**, also owns **longbow +2**. Has (Basic: **ring of X-ray vision, boots of travelling and leaping**; Advanced: **ring of ultravision, boots of striding and leaping**) and a rare magical item fashioned from a unicorn's horn that causes poisoned liquids to foam.
Tobek is an optimistic dandy and wine connoisseur, who tends to run roughshod over other people when involved in an adventure or when they are dealing with his wife. He and Lana are virtually estranged.

CB17b Lana Byloff; Magician adventurer
F; MU 8; N/NG; S 6, I 16, D 7; hp 24
Wears dark green cloak (Basic: **displacer cloak**; Advanced: **cloak of protection +2**) fastened with silver spider-brooch with water opal eyes (Basic: **talisman of elemental travel**; Advanced **periapt of wound closure**). Carries **dagger +1**. Also owns **wand of fear, wand of illusion, bracers of defence AC6**, (Basic: **ring of water walking**; Advanced: **ring of water breathing**), **rod of cancellation, potion of dimunition**, and several scrolls of her own devising.
Unless prepared, normally has few spells memorised except those necessary for her researches.
Lana has been working on various aspects of magical research, which has estranged her from her family. On the last adventure she undertook with Varlin and the others, she was very nearly killed when **charmed** by a vampire. Quite weak herself, she has been trying to enchant some gems so that they would make the bearer impervious to all **charm** attempts, but has failed so far.

CB18 Toreau's House: A small house compared to the other adventurers', since Ardise and Ildros don't care much for visitors.

CB18a Ardise 'Red Hand' Toreau; Fighter adventurer
F; F10; N/CG; hp 53/64
Scruffy clothes or **plate mail +1** and **shield +2**. Uses **battleaxe +1** or **longsword +2**. Also owns rings of (Basic: **safety, quickness**; Advanced: **feather fall, warmth**), **djinni summoning** and **fire resistance** (the first two are normally worn, the others kept on a 'watch chain' inside her waistcoat or armour), and (Basic: **pouch of security**; Advanced: six packets of **dust of sneezing and choking**). Her fascination with rings extends to non-magical ones as well, and she wears as many as a dozen, worth 100-2000gp each.
Ardise is an uncompromising fighter, and a careless, insensitive and abrasive comrade. She is normally both loyal and courageous — but her passion for collecting rings has actually led her into a fight with Tobek Byloff which — astonishly! — she lost. She is sullenly waiting for a rematch.

CB18b Ildros Toreau, aka Thorn of Xir; Historian
M; Fr 5; N/CN; I 18; hp 17
Ildros is the son of the magic-user under whom Lana served her apprenticeship. Formerly a noted historian in Xir, he now acts as Burghalter's record keeper. In his small office in the Inn, there is a huge map of all the surrounding wilderness, right up to the edge of the Steppe country. He will make accurate, smaller copies for 50gp each.

The People

The other citizens of the village are:
5 quarrymen, 10 masons and 10 builders; a foreman (Latel Tayar, **CB6b**), driver and cook. These work under Varlin and Solem's directions.
20 mercenaries under the command of Ardise Toreau (**CB18a**). One of these is the only other unmarried woman in the village (see Falli, **CB10b**). The guards are very protective of her.
30 elves under the guidance of Lagoniturel (**CB1a**).
30 halflings, with 14 children.
3 Inn staff
4 house servants for the adventurers.

The Politics

Nominally, Burghalter owes allegiance to the High Steward of the County of Cerwyn, Jeorge Fardwarm. However, the village is beyond the recognized boundaries of the County, and as such is merely a trading partner covered by certain guarantees of military assistance. In return, Varlin and Solem have paid a large sum of money to Fardwarm for the right to establish their temple here. Varlin is also secretly negotiating to have Burghalter officially recognised as a part of Cerwyn and for at least half the garrison of Arncastle to be moved here, offering his services as a mercenary to extend Cerwyn influence further south and east.

Because of this, employment would be available to adventurers willing to journey into the wilderness, although Varlin would not reveal the full extent of his plans to just anyone.

Varlin's imaginative and expansionist plans will inevitably cause problems as both the inhabitants of Burghalter and nearby towns and communities realise the full implications of what he has in mind. He is quite aware that the merchants who use Burghalter will support his plans, as they could look forward to the increase in revenues that a garrison would bring.

On the other hand, Varlin knows that the dwarves of Vasarpath will be concerned that the County's influence will be seen as approaching their independent town. Although he has had little contact with the barbarian tribes of the Steppes (and those cultures no-one knows of, which lie beyond), they are hardly likely to be pleased if they perceive even a small authority like Cerwyn extending its borders in their direction. Further, Varlin suspects, quite rightly, that the citizens of Arncastle will also be upset if they lose all or part of the revenues that the garrison has brought, along with the protection it has afforded them and their prestigious position as an honoured outpost of the County. He is completely unaware of the fact that some of the bitterest rivals to his plans will be his fellow adventurers, who have helped establish his position of authority within the town, and who use it as a base for their explorations into the mountains and steppes. They value the fact that Burghalter owes real allegiance to no-one, and are keen to make sure that no outside power increases its grip on 'their' little town.

Lastly, the elves have their own secret ambitions for the valley where the Mallorn grows, hoping that one day it will be a shrine held by them alone; Varlins's plans can hardly be said to tie in with this hope.

Plotlines

Apart from becoming involved in the high politics of Burghalter, PCs can find plenty of other ways of interfering in the daily lives of these interesting people:

1. Sooner or later, Megart (**CB10a**) is bound either to make a mistake, or to decide that he has enough money to return to the League, and Varlin will discover that the Inn's books have been cooked. Perhaps Falli will feel rejected once too often and give him away. But what will Varlin do, given that he has also been robbed at home. Just to save face, the cleric might be looking for someone who could track Megart down, and exact some sort of punishment, without anyone else knowing.

2. A stranger arrives, and three days later Megart is either dead, or begging the PCs for help. Who is the stranger, and how does he threaten the Inn Manager? Megart's brothers or the Knights Ocular might be the source of more trouble than anyone suspects....

3. Varlin finds cash running low, and is desperate to find the money that was stolen before. Who can he turn to but a party of outsiders?

4. Tobek and Lana part company. No-one need get involved in their domestic quarrel, of course, but a charismatic fighter might suddenly find himself the centre of her attentions. And Lana has something to offer the right man — the **gems of charm protection** that have been the centre of her researches for the last year. All Lana wants is protection, but it is not unlikely that she might become infatuated with a male PC who paid her the right kind of compliments. Whatever the truth of the matter, Tobek is going to fight back, and then Ardise is going to seize her chance to get her revenge for that amazing defeat over the ring. Varlin and Endor Solem will try to stop Ardise from getting involved, as well as dropping heavy hints to the erring (or totally innocent!) PC that it is time to move on.... but Ardise has a terrible anger and the mercenaries on her side. Burghalter might erupt in civil war — with the PCs in the middle.

And if that little lot doesn't convince you that Burghalter should become a tourist resort for your weary party, then turn overleaf, and find out what is happening *under the surface*....

Rakshasa Cult

For many years, Burghalter and its environs were dominated by the evil minions of a cult that worshipped the dreaded (and, some say, mythical) Rakshasa. These horrid beasts are rumoured to be able to appear in any form in order to cause victims to relax for the fateful second which seals their doom — and guarantees the Rakshasa a tasty meal. It is unclear why anyone should choose to honour and worship these evil creatures; although such acolytes can be of use to the Rakshasa, the monster recognises allegiance to no-one and these same acolytes could one day follow the same path as the other unfortunate victims of the cult.

It was an enormous relief, therefore, to all those who live in this part of Cerwyn, when the cult was vanquished and driven from the district. Since the coming of Varlin and his adventuring colleagues, life has returned to what passes for normal in this part of the world — so much so that even the occasional disappearance of a member of a passing caravan has raised no memory of the cult.

These disappearances are signs that the time of the Rakshasa has not entirely passed. The remnants of the cult — which was crushingly defeated by Varlin — fled deep underground into passages and caves beneath the village that even the dwarves would not have known of. There they wait, slowly recovering their strength, until the day when they might once more threaten the security of the whole of the Domains.

DM's Notes

There are no maps of the Rakshasa cult's lair, as it is made up of a tortuous network of cracks, tunnels, caves and underground rivers, far beneath the surface. Access to this network can be gained from the backs of the caves in the Burghalter valley (assuming the obstructions can be cleared without the interruption of investigating Burghalter citizens), via unnoticed and unexplored passageways. There is even a way down through the existing temple to Tarmenel. A fourth entry point exists beneath the new temple, being built in the middle of the village. Only the senior engineer, Castillo Solem, and the two clerics, Endor Solem and Varlin Ganz, know that the temple is being built on the site of a previous building — and even they do not know that this was a shrine of the Rakshasa cult. If PCs find the exremely well-hidden entry point (beneath a fake foundation stone), they will discover passage ways and tunnels that lead ultimately to the maze that the cult still occupies. This is the entry still used by cult acolytes on occasional forays into the night. And in this new centre of evil, they will find another shrine, built to honour something even more foul and horrid than the Rakshasa! Just what this thing is, the GM will have to think of — preferably in daylight....

As for the only mildly-terrorising members of the cult, there are listed below the acolytes and men-at-arms that are the remains of the cult. These are men and women of advancing years, long-starved of daylight. If desired, the GM could arrange for the party to meet one of the Rakshasa themselves, in which case those playing in a D&D campaign should treat this monster as the equivalent of an 18th level fighter with polymorph abilities, which can use MU and clerical spells (levels 1-3), can cast illusions at will, is immune to all spells of less than 7th level, and takes no damage from any but the most magical of weapons....

CB19a The Besotted One; Chief Acolyte
M; F12; C/LE; AC 0; hp 80/100; **ring of regeneration, mace +4**
This poor creature has long since forgotten his name, his past, why he came to be here or indeed anything that is outside his total adoration of the Rakshasa. Words like 'depraved' or 'evil' are almost meaningless when considering the complete control the monsters have over his mind and actions. Suffice it to say that he is a tool of the beasts, and will stop at nothing to lead the unwary or the weak to be eaten by them. If that is not possible, he will sacrifice his life to try and slay intruders — and it would be preferable to be slain rather than be taken alive.

CB19b Reena; Acolyte/Servant
F; F11; C/LE; AC -4; hp 56/68; **ring of invisibility, gauntlets of ogre power**
Reena has embraced the cult wholeheartedly since being captured. She was once fair and attractive and her good looks were the cause of the demise of many a hot-blooded male, and thus she was most useful to the Rakshasa. In her later years, this has been replaced by a ruthless spite. Although she is as much of a cipher as the Besotted One — devoting her time to capturing innocents for her masters — she is more likely to flee if confronted on her own. Amidst a mass of fellow cult members though, she will be a formidable fighter.

CB19c-d Servants
c: M; F9; C/LE; AC -4; hp 50/65; **axe +3, ring of protection +3**
d: M; C6; C/LE; AC 0; hp 25/35; **flail +2**
These, the last of the servants, are anonymous and mindless — save that they will prove to be potent defenders of the cult.

There are also 10 men-at-arms (F3, AC 1, hp 20/25, one has **sword +2**) who will fight to the death to protect the Rakshasa or their acolytes.

The Red Finger

Hidden on the cliffs above the village is an outcrop of strangely-coloured rock that juts into mid-air at an impossible angle, where it catches the rays of the rising and setting sun. These morning and evening rays enhance the rock's rich red colour, so that it almost seems to glow.

This geological accident has stirred religious thoughts in many and various people, and it has become a site of some religious significance for groups of gnomes and dwarves, who have seen it as a representation of the powers that control the earth. Similarly, many monsters have seen some significance in it that might not be immediately clear to men.

Sages who have studied it have remarked that it is probably the remains of a seam of metal that yields its colour when exposed to the air. These prosaic explanations have done nothing to diminish the awe and wonder in which it is held by those who consider it holy.

Today, the site is seen as something of a curiosity by the people of Burghalter, who pay it little heed. In a way, this is more than a little ironic, for it is the Red Finger which marks the furthest boundary of the raiding grounds of the barbarians from the Steppes. If it were not for this marker, the wild horsemen from beyond the Sarpath Mountains would have brought fire and ruin to the County of Cerwyn even more often.

Pilgrims come from strange and far-off places to see the Red Finger, and the people of Burghalter will often direct strangers to it, assuming that it is the cause of their visit, even though they pay it very little heed themselves.

DM's Notes

The truth of the matter is that the rock is made of solid iron, and as such will have a very powerful effect on any use of materials nearby that might be influenced by such a large source of ferrous metal. Of course, it is possible that your campaign would not be influenced by such an artifact, in which case you should feel free to replace the material with whatever might have an effect on — say — spellcasters....

It is naturally quite likely that rumours of this strange landmark will circulate to sites far away from Burghalter, and that it might be possible to use the Red Finger as a means for getting the players to this part of Cerwyn in the first place.

CB20a Far Sighted Gaspar; Hermit, lunatic
M; MU9/I10; C/CN; AC 9/10; hp 20; I 18; **wand of illusion** (disguised as a clay pipe)
May use any illusion type spell in Basic
The rock is guarded by an old gnome illusionist called Gaspar. He is highly intelligent and completely insane, although in a perfectly harmless and pleasant way. His insanity is not entirely due to the solitary existence he has led since first he came to sit at the foot of the rock; he must have been at least mildly eccentric to have done so in the first place.

He will afford no danger to anyone who visits the rock, but he may trick or confuse them by minor illusions designed for his own amusement. He will stop at nothing, however, if he feels that a visitor might have a mind to perpetrate serious harm upon this prized possession.

In addition to the normal accoutrements of his life as a hermit, he possesses a wonderful and peculiar instrument that has earned him his nickname 'Far-sighted'. It is a long, hollow tube with pieces of glass in each end, that Gaspar says allows him to see things that could not normally be seen. Not many people, when given the opportunity to use this device, can make it perform in the way that Gaspar claims it does....

CB20b Crothone Bear; Tribesman
M; F4/B4; N; AC 4; hp 28/40; S 18; shortbow, spear
Whenever the PCs are at the rock, they will be observed secretly by Crothone and his fellow Bear tribesmen and women. This unfortunate group of barbarian horse-raiders have been 'exiled' here by the head of another clan within their tribal group, after a mistake involving the ownership of some deer horns. Having taken issue with the tribal chief, the Bear clan is in disgrace, and Crothone and his kin have been stationed here to watch the rock. Their instructions are simple; they are to remain at the rock until such time as the Red Finger shines no longer at Day-end, when the peoples of his tribe will lead the barbarian invasion of Cerwyn.

It has already been seven months, but Crothone has not neglected his duty for a moment. The tribesmen are masters of camouflage, and it is unlikely that the PCs will notice them while they are at the rock. However, if they do anything that causes the rock's glow to fail — blowing it to atoms might have the effect — the PCs will hear the howling war-cry of the Bears, and Crothone and his fellows will be off to tell the tribe the good news. Alternatively, if the PCs wander around the mountains about the Red Finger, the Bears might attack them or spring a few traps, just to while away another day.

Crothone is accompanied by 30 Bear tribesmen and women (F1-4/B1-4; AC 2-4; hp 7-21/11-40; bows, axes, daggers) who will follow his orders without fail unless they would offend the honour of the clan.

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A Familiar Liability

by Mark Davies

I have yet to meet (or role-play) a magic user who would be satisfied with finding a toad as a familiar. It lacks any sense of style. Such an outcome is all the more unsatisfactory when it relies totally on random chance; an inherent problem with a spell of **find familiar**'s description.

Of course, the choice of familiar should not be open to exact specifications, but the process should be weighted appropriately so that a wizard, for example, can expect something better, on average, than the pimple-faced apprentice who has just graduated from souring milk with cantrips. Consequently, the chance of the master being blessed with a toad, while the apprentice — with the first real spell he has ever cast — manages to obtain an imp, would be much less.

A similar point has been expressed, but in a slightly different situation, by **IMAGINE**™ magazine's own Order of Heralds — known collectively under the sagacious title of *Dispel Confusion*. In issue 16 they state as part of an answer to a reader's question: *'we tend to think that a dragon's familiar should be out of the ordinary – after all, a toad is not going to last long in the company of a red dragon – and we find it difficult to take some possible familiars seriously (a green dragon with a weasel?). We suggest that a dragon would automatically have a special familiar appropriate to its alignment.'*

What seems to be suggested as a solution is: for PCs use the **find familiar** spell, but for the NPCs (dragons) with any real clout, skip the mechanics of the spell and simply choose a familiar.

I agree totally with the above statement concerning a dragon's suitability as owner of a toad or weasel, but it does not go far enough! It's alright saying 'simply choose a familiar', but such cosmetic solutions neglect an important underlying principle in good play, that of consistency. So where, or more importantly how, do dragons alone obtain special familiars? If spell-casting wyrms — with whom run-of-the-spell familiars would not last two segments — can manage some degree of selection, surely so can any adventuring spellcaster.

At present, the **find familiar** spell fails to deal satisfactorily with the stature of the spellcaster, its definition being too constrained and inadequate to accommodate such a potentially exciting facet of role-playing a magic user. In these terms, the problems involved in the search for a familiar go beyond this spell alone, for the only spellcaster profession dealt with is the mage. However, according to the description under the quasit in the MM, 'the quasit is the unchanged form of the familiar of a chaotic evil magic user *or cleric....*' A similar situation applies with the imp. But how do clerics obtain such assistants?

In the following sections, I aim first to deal with how clerics go about finding their familiars, which will eventually lead to a revision of the **find familiar** spell.

CLERICS

The traditional witch or tribal shaman did not simply cast a spell of the **find familiar** variety in an attempt to possess a familiar. Instead, in conjunction with their own blend of minor magic, they enlisted the aid of their supernatural patron.

The familiar is an integral part of the cleric's spiritual activities and aspirations; no witch in her 'right' mind would have thought of cavorting without her familiar spirit in attendance. To possess a familiar should be a great honour, an indirect link with the immortal being to whom the spellcaster looks for guidance, assistance and hope for the future. Consequently, as an act of faith, familiar and master become inextricably tied together, to the extent that there is permanent suffering if the familiar is killed. This spiritual relationship is already hinted at in the description of the imp and quasit. Both are specifically 'created to spread evil in the form of a familiar' by their respective patrons, an Arch-devil or Demon Lord.

Those desiring a familiar must first petition their patron deity. For clerics the form the petition takes is a modified **chant**, which can be cast only on a holy day and requires one hour to perform.

Such a petition can only be made once by a specific character — assuming it is answered. An answer arrived at by the patron is final — the gods hate bickering with mortals! Therefore, once a character has been informed of the type of familiar he is destined to receive, the result is unshakeable. The bond is meant to be permanent; a cleric can never replace a lost familiar.

Once the type has been specified by the divine oracle, all is not over. Although the petitioner now knows what kind of creature is to be possessed, he still needs to seek out a representative individual so as to effect the **words of union** (see below). If a character is especially favoured by a patron being, then guidance may be given in the form of riddles, omens or strange encounters, concerning how best to set about obtaining the familiar.

An example of such familiar acquisition is the case of the Faithful Funkel of Frey. As a result of a petition, Funkel has been informed by Frey that his fated familiar attendant is to be a giant skunk (MM). Consequently, the cleric must search out such a creature. If the search is fruitful, Funkel must face the potential familiar alone and speak the **words of union** (treat as a new first level spell: casting time: 1/3 segment; verbal component only). This interaction between the two must be the first ever. Needless to say it is best well planned — a witless intrusion could spoil everything.

In terms of resisting the **words of union**, the creature has a saving throw vs spells, but for each level of the cleric a penalty of -5%/-1 is incurred on magic resistance and saving throw respectively. This ceremonial binding can be attempted only once per year, since if the creature makes its save, the petitioning cleric will be treated with disdain by a patron who will see this as a failed test of will. The cleric will need to reassume worth in the deity's eyes.

How beneficial a petitioning **chant** is depends upon a number of factors. It is important to consider the predisposition of the deity concerned. Compare Hecate, who is a goddess of magic, lawful and considerate of her clerics, with Loki, god of mischief and strife, definitely chaotic and not especially thoughtful towards his clerics and you can see there is a good chance that the goddess will listen and act upon the request, while Loki will probably masquerade as interested, but cancel the petition without warning. However, in the latter case the request is only forfeit until the next holy day — the gods might be just as inclined to act in their clerics' interests next time!

MAGIC USERS

As with clerics, the magic-user's relationship with a familiar is extremely important — not something to be entered into lightly. The 'contract' is more binding than a legal piece of parchment, and the repercussions are severe if it is broken. In the AD&D game, magic users are ultimately the most powerful of spellcasters, because they are largely independent of any kind of supernatural sponsor. They develop their magical skills directly. But this personal control seems to fail at a most critical time when attempting to find a familiar. Unlike clerics, magic users cannot rely on a petition being suitably weighted on their behalf by a supernatural benefactor. Instead, the essential bond is formed through the mage's ability to channel the magic — eventually forging together two kindred spirits. If such a link is broken, as a result of a familiar's death, magic users can attempt to discover a new familiar, but will be limited in their success (see below).

Diverging from the traditional interpretation of the **find familiar** spell (conjuring/summoning), the new definition involves divination/enchantment/charm magic. The effects of casting the revised spell is similar to the result of the cleric's petitioning **chant**. The information received concerns the type of familiar the mage is destined to befriend. However, this fateful information is dependent on the mage's stature, which is similar in effect to the weighting process performed by the cleric's patron. That is, the greater the stature, the more successful the channelling of the magic. Once the spell has been cast the result is unchangeable, the channel formed is analogous to the magic user's fingerprints; a permanent manifestation of the link or potential link between the familiar and its master. Only if the familiar dies does the channel dissipate.

Divining what form the familiar will take is only half the problem. A receptive individual of the type identified must nest be found so that the final part of the newly-defined spell can be accomplished. The enchantment/charm aspects of the spell relate to the magic user's ability to bind the familiar. However, it should be noted that the mage is under the same sort of restrictions as the cleric when preparing to use **words of kinship** (casting time 1/3 segment; verbal component only).

If a spell-casting wyrm — with whom run-of-the-spell familiars would not last two segments — can manage some degree of selection, surely so can any adventuring spellcaster

For both cleric and magic user, whether via patron being or focused magic, the process of obtaining a familiar has many common factors. First, the type of familiar is identified. In game terms this needs to involve a procedure where a base score is modified by a number of variables. Following this, there is the acquisition phase that depends on the use of **words of binding/kinship**.

To help DMs visualise the manner in which the familiar type is identified, what follows are two illustrations. Throughout both these examples, a number of variables will be introduced that should have an important effect upon the type of familiars characters as described would be destined to possess. These variables are not an exhaustive list, but cover major factors that may often influence the result. However, such variable-weighting should be specific to the character under consideration, and the DM's own campaign emphasis.

A character has cast the appropriate spell, and waits to know what fate has in store. How should a DM begin?

Regardless of the character's source of power, the DM should initially obtain a base score by rolling d100. This is the provisional result that chance has seen fit to allow, representative of the flux in the magical forces wielded, astrological considerations, mysterious interference or a number of other uncontrollable or unpredictable forces. It is this score that will be modified by varying degrees to represent the character's stature.

Thus, Arch-Mage Salgo. He has reached 22nd level as a dedicated follower of Hecate, and is CE. This day, he casts his **find familiar** with the correct ingredients — and the DM rolls a base score of 81%. It seems that Salgo chose the right moment.

Additionally, Salgo is no apprentice mage, and so the base chance is improved by 1% for every 2 levels Salgo possesses; a modifier of +11%. However, the DM considers his alignment play has not been true, and that Hecate might have wanted to see a little more evil; thus the score is modified by -5%. Certain other episodes in his past cause the DM to make other alterations. Salgo has forced his way through to become President of his Guild; +5%. He has kept up his studies, but he did once fail to meet the challenge of a paladin who was causing Hecate some difficulty; -2%. The Arch-Mage has also called on Hecate to intervene, in a situation that certainly warranted such a request, but which has used up some of his patron's goodwill; -1%. His overbearing ego leads him to believe he has powers beyond his mortal status; -5%. Although aged, he is sound; +2%. Finally, DM adds a final modifier of +5%, since Salgo's reason for wanting a familiar are harmonious with his other ambitions as a mage — he seeks more personal power!

A second example is the case of the High Priestess of Marduk, Tolemek. Many situation that certainly demanded such a of the variables outlined for Salgo are also request, but which has used up some of relevant for her, but — as might be expected — the emphasis lies elsewhere.

Tolemek appears to have chosen a time when the stars were not favourable to her petition to Marduk, for her provisional score is 42%. Being 12th level, she automatically receives a bonus of 2% for every three levels of experience; +8%. She has been true to her alignment, but

there has been a question mark against her professionalism. Marduk demands that his clerics preach his teachings, hopefully nurturing his worship in the process. Tolemek's sole concern is her addiction to the written word; -5%.

The temple at which Tolemek is second-in-command has the strict rule that all chromatic dragons (offspring of Tiamat) are to be destroyed without exception. Unfortunately, Tolemek showed mercy to a young female red dragon as payment for several old scrolls detailing the rudimentary structure of the wyrm's tongue. A penalty of -3% is incurred (not more, since it was a temple law and not of Marduk). In terms of sacrifice, Tolemek has never failed to offer the best she possibly could; +10%. Despite her youth, Tolemek's only ambition is to increase her collection of books, the consequence of which is a -2% penalty, and the DM adds another -3% since the cleric's reason for calling for a familiar is in the hope that she obtains one which can **read magic**.

The table below summarises how the variables affect the basic roll for these characters:

FACTOR	EFFECT	TOLEMEK	SALGO
Deity's predisposition	Accepts petition	YES	N/A
Basic roll		+42	+81
Character's level	+½ levels (MU)		+11
	+⅔ lvls (CLERIC)	+08	
Alignment play	-5%/displacement	—	-05
Professionalism	+/- 1-5%	-05	+05
Miscreant Behaviour	+/- 1-5%	-03	-02
Calls for intervention	-1%/-10% major	—	-01
Ego	+/- 1-5%	N/A	-05
Sacrifice	+/- 1-10%	+10	N/A
Ambition	+/- 1-5%	-02	+02
Reasons	+/- 1-5%	-03	+05
		47%	89%

Other modifications to the roll could be instigated by the DM or a discerning player. For example, a PC magic user decides to take some precautions before casting the spell, and seeks advice from a sage concerning the stars. This could be worth +10% (although deliberately false information could make this -10%). Furthermore, magic users who have lost a previous familiar should suffer a -20% penalty.

The final figure should be compared with the following table:

Die roll (d100)	Familiar Type
01-10	None
11-60	Domestic
61-85	Attendant
86-99	Special
00	Exceptional

From the results of Salgo's and Tolemek's efforts, it is obvious that the mage has been more successful. He has managed to fufil his immediate ambition, knowing that he is destined to possess a Special familiar. The cleric has not been so fortunate, and knows hers will be a domestic creature.

Now that the type of familiar is known, what of its specific identity? The limited selection of 6 ordinary (domestic) and 4 special familiars, as outlined under the traditional **find familiar** spell description, can only serve as a rough estimate if the full potential of this reinterpretation of familiar ownership is to be realised. But how can an increase in variety be managed without merely constructing a longer list of suitable creatures in an attempt to cover all contingencies? The answer lies in what makes a familiar, rather than in just what is.

WHAT MAKES A FAMILIAR?

To cope with the flexibility of the reinterpretation of how one obtains a familiar, the constituent characteristics of each type of familiar need to be identified. Consequently, a creature must all given criteria for a certain type of familiar before it can be considered as such. The resultant classification of 4 types of familiar with their identifiable criteria allows liberal interpretation on the part of the DM, so that familiars can now be chosen to fit a specific campaign milieu.

Domestic Familiars: As a group, domestic familiars include those already available by the old **find familiar** spell, excluding the special familiars. Other possible examples are: bat, ordinary (MM2), jackal (MM) and rat, ordinary (MM2). The general characteristics of this group are that the familiars should not have more than 1HD; they should not possess more than animal intelligence prior to becoming a familiar, and be no taller than 4 feet, nor more than 8 feet in length. The rule concerning hit dice, although it goes against the **Players' Handbook** advice of 2-4hps, has been altered to incorporate such animals as the domestic cat (MM2) and owl (MM2). In all other respects, follow the details in the PH, but note that a few things may vary. For example, an ordinary bat at times possesses a better armour class than 7 and the rat has the ability to **cause disease**.

Attendant Familiars: Similar to the domestic group, this category deals with non-fabulous beasts with intelligence no greater than 7, prior to familiar status. Their hit dice should be at least 1+1, and can reach as high as the recipient's level/hit dice divided by 2 (rounded up) +2. They can be up to 6 foot tall and 12 feet in length. Thus, a fifth level magic user can possess an attendant familiar with maximum hit dice of 5.

The beneficial effects of possessing an attendant familiar are that for each hit die the familiar has, its master gains 1hp, while any appropriate sensory abilities are placed at the spellcaster's disposal. If killed, the owner will suffer the loss of double the hit points originally gained, permanently.

Special Familiars: Members of the special familiar's category are fabulous in nature, with their hit dice not exceeding 4 and their intelligence between 5 and 14 initially. Obviously the brownie, imp, quasit and pseudo-dragon fall into this group, along with other possibilities such as mephits (FF), grigs (MM2) and screaming devilkin (FF). As with standard types, no special familiar can be greater than 4 feet in height or 8 feet in length (when in true form).

In terms of powers transferred, the only general guidance that can be given is that when a DM nominates a creature as a specific familiar, the traditional examples should be used as pointers concerning

the benefits accrued by the spellcaster. The most important consideration is the maintenance of game balance

Take, for example, Celé, the elven mage, who has an elfin cat (MM2) as a special familiar. As a result of their special relationship, they can communicate telepathically for over a mile; Celé receives the cat's Magic Resistance when within 1" of the feline and gains its alertness (only surprised 1/20) when within 3" of the other. However, if the familiar is killed, then Cele will lose 1 point of constitution for every hit die the familiar possessed, - 3 in Cele's case.

Exceptional Familiars: This group holds the elite of familiars. Their intelligence ranges from 7-18, and obviously they are fabulous in nature. Their hit dice are not allowed to exceed half the spellcaster's levels (rounded up) and in true form they are limited to 6 feet in height and 12 feet in length.

For example, Wizard (11th level) Galtrax has been very fortunate in his call for a familiar and has obtained a red abishai (MM2). Other possibilities were a blue abishai or duegar (MM2), to name just a couple. However, such monsters as a green abishai and bearded devil (MM2) could not be considered because of the respective excess in hit dice and size.

It is more hazardous for the DM to work out the powers obtained by the master of an exceptional familiar because of the lack of rulebook examples. To clarify the position, consider the example of Tellec, cult worshipper of Geryon:

Tellec, an evil priest, has been a faithful Tellec, an evil priest, has been a faithful and succesful servant of Geryon. On reaching 14th level, she petitioned the devil for a familiar to aid her ambition of increasing Geryon's cult following, while simultaneously reducing those of Belial and Moloch. She was 'blessed' with an exceptional familiar in the form of a styx devil (FF)! The powers Tellec received were 50% Magic Resistance when within

1" of the devil; its sensory abilities; and, while the devil remains on the prime material plane, Tellec's level is increased by 2. However, there are conditions for such favouritism; Tellec must supply a human sacrifice once per month, donate ¼ of her treasure to the devil (latter's choice) and feed the familiar on the cleric's own blood....

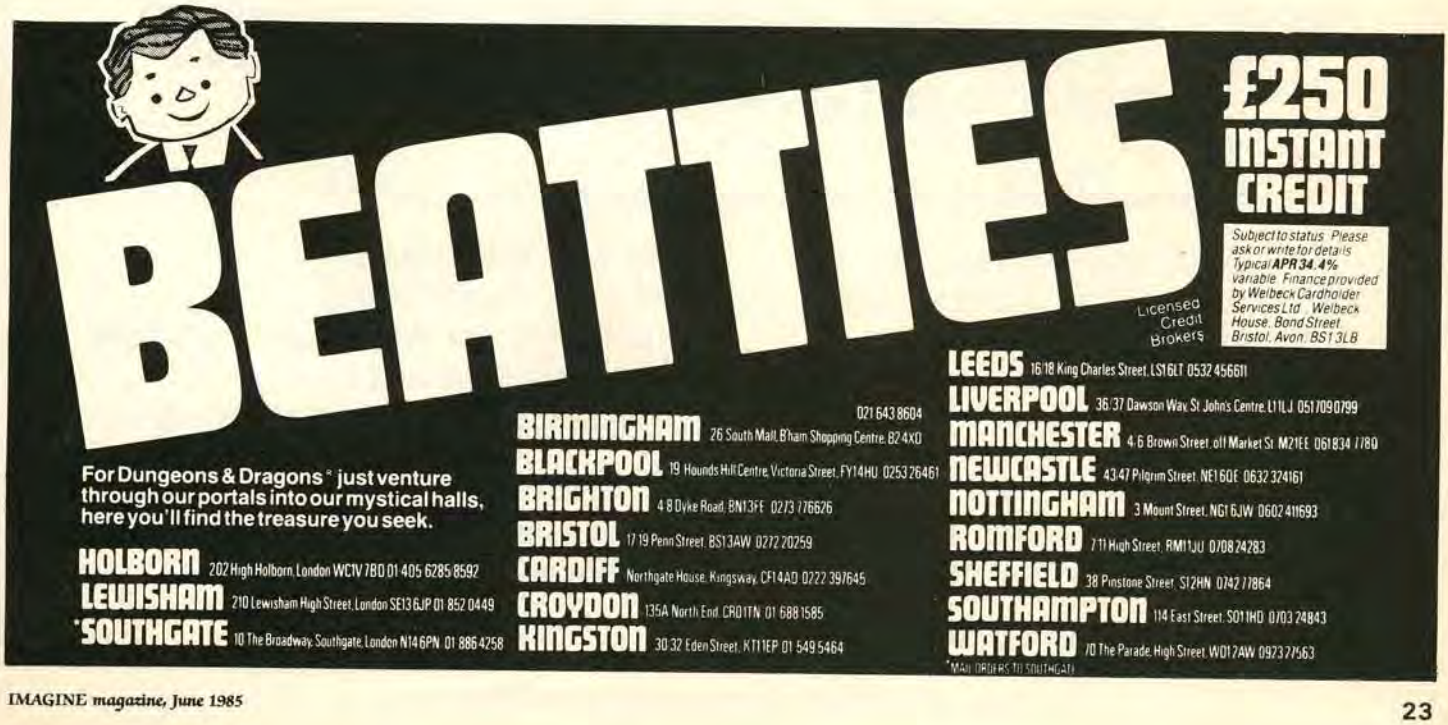
There are also potential risks involved. If the devil 'dies', then Tellec would suffer the permanent loss of 1 point of constitution for each hit die the devil possessed -7. Needless to say, if Tellec died there would be little deliberation on the part of the styx devil concerning what its next action would be; Geryon is always ready to be entertained at home.

The simple conclusion to this section is that the specific identity of a familiar, given its category, is dependent upon the DM's preference. It could be a random choice or it could be in tune with a character's desires. For example, Salgo has always craved for a quasit. This monster falls within the restraints of the special familiar category and thus would be an apt choice. The case of Tolemek is somewhat different. She wanted a familiar that could read magical script, but the outcome of her petition was that her destined companion was to be of the domestic type. None of these can read magical script! However, according to **Legends & Lore**, Marduk (Tolemek's patron) favours birds, and therefore she receives a crow — or at least she must bind such a creature to herself, as Salgo must his quasit!

Although it is open for the DM to bypass the petition or magic channel and simply choose an appropriate familiar, it seems more balanced, logical and flexible to involve forces of discrimination that can be applied equally to a number of situations. Because of such intervention in terms of a chance roll, a PC must carefully plan his single call for a familiar. He must continually watch his role-playing even before a spell is cast, along with any ambitions. Thus the character begins not only to exist in the present, but to a degree possesses a past and a future.

Previously, a character would either decide to try for a familiar or would not, regardless of the situation, since the outcome was beyond the spellcaster's control. With the DM now weighting the result as a consequence of character performance, it should be an incentive for improved role-playing — even for clerics. With good play, no more the familiar liability, but rather an unfamiliar one!

Mark Davies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BRIGHTON 4-8 Dyke Road, BN1 3FE 0273 776626
BRISTOL 17-19 Penn Street, BS1 3AW 0272 20259
CARDIFF Northgate House, Kingsway, CF1 4AD 0222 397645
CROYDON 135A North End, CR0 1TN 01 688 1585
KINGSTON 30-32 Eden Street, KT1 1EP 01 549 5464
LEEDS 16-18 King Charles Street, LS1 6LT 0532 456611
LIVERPOOL 36-37 Dawson Way, St. Johns Centre, L1 1LJ 051 709 0799
MANCHESTER 4-6 Brown Street, off Market St. M2 1EE 061 834 7780
NEWCASTLE 43-47 Pilgrim Street, NE1 6QE 0632 324161
NOTTINGHAM 3 Mount Street, NG1 6JW 0602 411693
ROMFORD 7-11 High Street, RM1 1JU 0708 24283
SHEFFIELD 38 Pinstone Street, S1 2HN 0742 77864
SOUTHAMPTON 114 East Street, SO1 1HD 0703 24843
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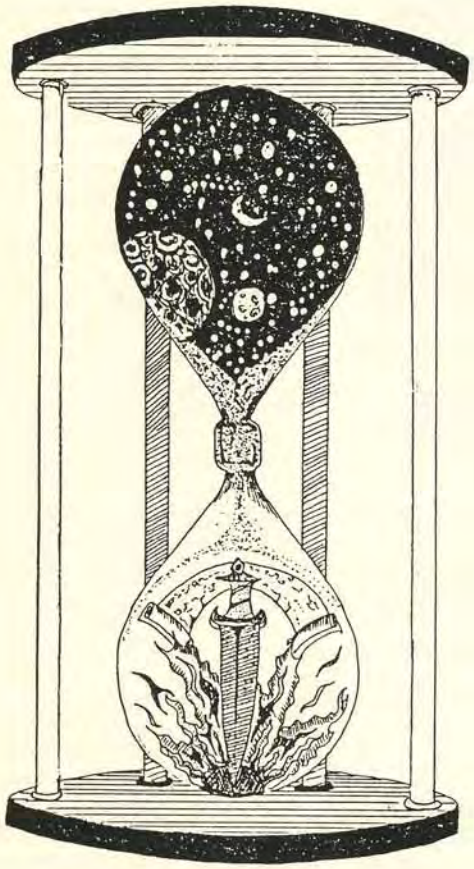

Peering through the coarse bracken we view the only bridge across the river. Alas, how do we deal with that encampment of fearsome creatures squatting and snarling their curses to unknown ears! A fight breaks out, giving our warriors an opportunity to charge forward! Too late, the creatures rally themselves for the ensuing awesome fight, but being overwhelmed they flee in confusion — the bridge is ours!
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IM 27 AD&D

One Fine Day in the Middle of the Night

by Paul Emsley

This module is suitable for use with either the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** or **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** games. Set in the City League, part of **IMAGINE™** magazine's campaign world of **Pelinore**, it can instead be placed in any city setting of the Dungeon Masters's own devising.

STATISTICS

The format given below for statistics is the standard one used for all the major City League non-player characters (NPCs) who have appeared in **IMAGINE** magazine. Permission is granted to reproduce this information for personal use for those players who wish to store the campaign material.

Major Non-Player Characters

Whenever important NPCs are described in the text they will be given in a standard format. While all the statistics are for the **D&D** and **AD&D** games, the general information about each character will allow referees using other systems to quickly extrapolate the information required. Details of the characters will be presented as follows:

Line 1: Identifying Number; Name; Gender; Class & Level; Alignment.
Line 2: Weapon; Armour class; hp
Line 3: Race (immediately below ID number)
Lines 4-10: Ability statistics in the form 'S 17', etc
Lines 4-10: Indented from the statistics — details of character
- ☐ appearance
- ☐ occupation
- ☐ characterizations
- ☐ contacts

Wherever alternatives are given for a particular piece of information (eg hp 8/11) the **D&D** game statistics are shown before the slash and those for the **AD&D** game after.

Minor Non-Player Characters

Less important NPCs will be described merely by name and a few descriptive sentences. All such characters are NM/F0, hp 4 unless otherwise defined. It is possible that an otherwise unimportant NPC might become the centre of undue attention during the game, in which case the DM should add whatever statistics are required.

Abbreviations

In addition to the usual abbreviations used in NPC and creature statistics, the following will also be used:
For the AD&D game: **A**ssassin; **A**crobat; **B**arbarian; **B**ard; **C**leric; **C**avalier; **D**ruid; **F**ighter; **F**reeman; **I**llusionist; **M**onk; **M**agic **U**ser; **P**aladin; **R**anger; **T**hief.
For the D&D game (where these are different): **A**venger; **D**warf; **E**lf; **½**ling; **K**night; **N**ormal **M**an.
Races (where not covered by the above): **½E**lf; **G**nome; **H**uman, **½O**rc.

Spellbooks

Magic-using NPCs' spellbooks show level, followed in brackets by the spells as numbered in the relevant rule books. The spell will be marked with an asterisk if it is currently memorised; eg 1 (2, 3*) means that the MU has the first level spells numbered 2 and 3 in her spell book and that number 3 is currently memorised. Full spell memory may not be allocated to allow the DM some flexibility in this regard.

The Freeman or Freewoman

In the **Pelinore** campaign, a non-player character class has been created for use in towns and cities. Rather than have these populated by just a mixture of exotic adventurers and thousands of zero-level fighters (NM/F0), this class allows for the development of a great many people — merchants, functionaries, clerks, bankers, guildsmen and others. Note that this is not intended to be a class available to player-characters and, after a quick look, very few players would be that keen to joins its ranks anyway.

Character Abilities

Abilities are rolled up as usual; these people are no more or less able than the average adventurer. In certain circumstances, the DM should reduce some ability scores to allow for the less-than-strenuous training that non-adventurous Freemen or Freewomen may have had.

Bonuses due to character abilities

Strength: No attack/damage bonuses, others normal
Intelligence: Normal language bonuses
Wisdom: Normal Saving Throw bonuses
Dexterity: No missile bonuses, others normal
Constitution: Ordinary (non-fighter) hit point bonuses
Charisma: Normal

Character class details

Hit die type: d4/d6
Max no of hit dice: 9 (+1hp for each level above 9)
Spell ability: nil
Level limit: none
Armour: any, but rarely worn
Shield: possible
Weapons: any, but only ever proficient in one (-5 non-proficiency penalty)
Combat table: attack as magic users of equivalent level
Oil? yes
Poison? yes
Racial restrictions: none

The level of a Freeman of Freewoman is not determined by experience points but by a combination of their wealth, age and influence. At 10th level Freemen and Freewomen become members of the nobility. Thus a simple bureaucratic flunkey would be Fr1, a journeyman of a guild Fr2, a wealthy trader Fr5, a courtier Fr8 and so on. They may use any magical item that can be used by a fighter or thief. Freemen and Freewomen save as fighters of the same level.

On the following table, some of those Freemen and women who have been detailed so far in the magazine are shown, with their profession and code number, to give an idea of how the various levels work:

Fr1: Maratar, Emanlia, Jasmina and Last Hope Burwright (10d-g) Millers' daughters; Countess Flavia of Cerwyn (aged 15)
Fr2: Hurnaker Scard (4a) Brewer; Samuel Evening (9h) Cook; Ja'n'it Evening (9i) Stockwoman; Millipy Burwright (10b) Seamstress; Melom (23b) Peasant
Fr3: Mylitis Ep-Stein (2a) Apothecary; Link Pinthrip (3b) Money collector for Travellers' Shrine; Olivine Burwright (10c) Miller; Mailai Frith-Lorendar (15b) Clerk; Daliel (15c) Assistant Clerk; Redbeam (15i) Cooper; i'Nimma, i'Nemma (19c-d) Mummers
Fr4: Celine Burwright (11a) Ale-house owner
Fr5: Jasper Burwright (10a) Miller; Aethelron Verthill (21b) Asst Arena manager; Matrexes di Regines (CD5a) Landowner
Fr6: Longelf (19b) Tumbler
Fr7: Gilas Widgery (15a) Magistrate; Estorillian (15h) Silversmith; Sir Jeorge Fardwarm, High Steward of Cerwyn
Fr8: Malachite Burwright (9a) MU School Steward; One-eyed Sadford (33k) Merchant Captain
Fr10: Ohne Parsite aka Lady Miralex, Duchess of Faler (11h); Pablo Fanquay (19a) Showman

DM's INTRODUCTION

Access to copies of the relevant rule books is required and access to **IMAGINE** magazines #19 (p10, **Law and Order**) and #26 (p13 **The Gods of Pelinore**) will prove useful, but not essential to running the adventure. Note also that some PCs might have knowledge of the general background to the struggle between Pharastus and Tarmenel, if they played in the module **The Necklace of Lilith** (IMAGINE magazine, #20), or, alternatively that **One Fine Day....** might make an interesting introduction to that adventure.

Unlike many adventures, characters in **One Fine Day....** will succeed or fail almost regardless of their level or numbers. It is quite possible that a party of one, two or three, intelligently run, mid-level characters will have far greater success than a large group of all-powerful high level types. The Dungeon Master (DM) should read through the module before running it to decide whether it is suitable for the characters and players in his or her campaign.

Background

'Know then, O Prince, that in ages past the priests of Pharastus (may their very shadows writhe in torment) hunted across the lands, slaying and reaving the clerics of Tarmenel, and others of purity and goodness. Pharastus (who should not be named in jest) exulted in the deeds of his infidel followers, foul, unnatural and criminal as they were.

'Know further, O Mighty Prince, that, at the last, men turned their hands and swords against the accursed ones. The hidden temples of Pharastus were cast down into the dirt, their disgusting congregations transported into mean slavery and the unclean priests slain. And henceforward the lands of men knew peace and prospered mightly under the enlightened rule of your forefathers.

'But also know, O Wise and Puissant Visitor, that still the foul worship of Pharastus continues, hidden in darkness from the eyes of the just and noble....'

Thus spoke Iacub, 239th Guildmaster of Luminaries, and his words were recorded in the stupendously voluminous *Words To A Visiting Prince* (a first-edition copy of which exists in the Capitol library). The exact station of Iacub's listener — and even his very existence — has been a constant source of debate for scholars and scribes ever since the book came to light, some seven centuries ago. Iacub's words are often quoted by ecclesiastical and secular authorities in suppressing the secret worship of Pharastus which continues to the present day in many parts of Pelinore, including the City League.

Rendoulf Breeks, the owner of Djon Radreasen's Apothecary in Piper's Corner is, by appearances, a normal shopkeeper. Like most of his fellow traders in the Boroughs district of the City League, he seems worried about the fluctuations of trade, rising costs and lazy staff. However, unknown to anyone save his wife, Mosaiche, he is actually Angstear, Beloved of Pharastus, a cleric of the murderous cult.

Rendoulf/Angstear and Mosaiche carefully maintain a facade of respectability, despite the fact that customers are occasionally aided in 'entering the arms of Pharastus' by judicious additions to their usual preparations. If his simples, potions, herbs and spice mixtures do not seem as effective as they might be, or those who are ill take a turn for th worse, no blame is to Rendoulf Breeks, Senior Member of the Guild Apothecaries and Herbalists. Cannot a cholic or quinsy kill a man who does not take care of himself?

Over recent months Rendoulf/Angstear has begun taking a variety of herb and drug preparations during ceremonies in honour of Pharastus. During the twitching trances induced by these drugs Rendoulf/Angstear has been granted visions which have lead him to new foulness in the service of his god. At the urging of his hallucinations, he has hatched a scheme to corrupt a good man to the service of Pharastus, feeding the unfortunate victim with a mind-altering preparation that induces violent amnesiac fits. The potion was brewed, and a victim sought...

Sir Rubin Hewd was unfortunate enough to come to the attention of Rendoulf at the opportune moment. Sir Rubin, a fighting soldier, suffers from headaches when required to think about ideas beyond those normal to a soldier. Grown popular in the service of Nortus d'Erebia, the Count of Bereduth, Sir Rubin has become a potential threat to some minor members of the family. Hence his presence in the City League (with his clerk, Grame Merels), overseeing negotiations with the Guilds of Butchers, Millers and Sutlers, fixing the prices for Bereduth produce. Sir Rubin developed a persistent pain behind his left eye during the negotiations and, as he happened to be lodging at the Blue Piper, he called at Djon Radrasen's Apothecary for a remedy. Rendoulf saw his chance and added a few extra ingredients to Sir Rubin's tonic.

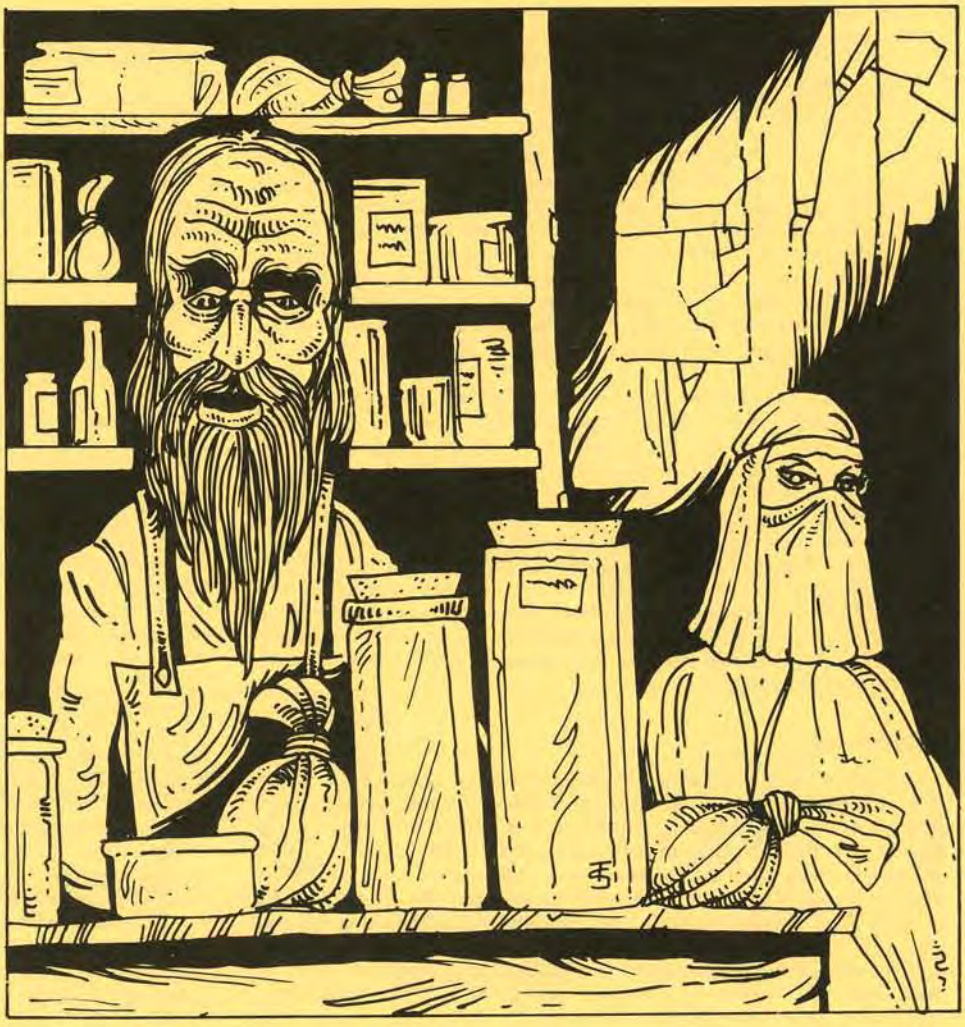
Three days later Sir Rubin was in the grip of a fever. Merels sent for Rendoulf — as an old soldier he had seen physicians and surgeons in action. Rendoulf diagnosed Sir Rubin as choleric and a trifle melancholic, and stipulated complete rest, a diet of beans and garlic and regular doses of a potion of his own devising to cool the blood. The first

two parts of the treatment could be dealt with by the staff at the Blue Piper. Rendoulf agreed to send Ellucasim, his apprentice, with the potion, each day at dusk. After giving Sir Rubin a dose of the potion and charging him 200gp, Rendoulf left.

That very evening the hideously disfigured corpse of a young man was found in the alley by Piper's Theatre. At first it was thought that only a wild beast could have killed him in so savage a fashion, and Brendes Feergarl, the Bear-tamer, came under immediate suspicion — or at least his bear did. Such suspicions were quickly allayed when Brendes and his bear were found similarly slain in the stables of Piper's Theatre two nights later. Over the next fortnight nine more corpses turned up in the immediate vicinity of Piper's Corner, all brutally murdered.

Sir Rubin, confined to his sick bed, heard of the murders and the lack of progress that the Borough District Militia and Guild Militias were making from his clerk, Merels. Aware that in his present weakened state he could not extend his protection to the terrorised community, he ordered Merels to sell his armour and offer the money, some 2000gp, as a reward for the capture of the murderer.

The murderer is closer than Sir Rubin realises, as it is he who is committing the crimes under the influence of Rendoulf's potion. Rendoulf has started reducing the concentration of the potion he is giving to Sir Rubin without reduction in its effects. Every other night after being dosed with Rendoulf's 'cure', Sir Rubin rises from his sick bed, descends to the streets and stalks in search of lone victims. After battering the unfortunate person to death Sir Rubin returns to his bed and sleeps peacefully until morning. When he wakes he is utterly unaware of what he has done.



Time Scale of Events

4 years ago: Rendoulf/Angstear purchases an equal share in the business of Djon Radrasen & Son, Apothecary, from Luchas Radrasen.
18 months ago: Luchas Radrasen dies after mistaking blackcurrants and deadly nightshade berries. A verdict of death by misadventure is returned by the District Court six months later.
5 months ago: Rendoulf Breeks moves stock out of the cellar and into the main part of the Apothecary. Rumours that this is due to subsidence cause a drop in property values in the surrounding blocks. Rendoulf/Angstear secretly constructs a small temple to Pharastus in his cellar.
4 weeks ago: Sir Rubin Hewd and Grame Merels take up lodgings in the Blue Piper while they conduct negotiations with various Guilds.
3 weeks ago: Sir Rubin taken ill. The murders begin. The killings continue at semi-random intervals as doses of Rendoulf/Angstear's foul potion are administered to Sir Rubin.
5 days ago: A double killing. One is another in the series of savage attacks, the other is caused by a a dagger wound in the back of the neck.

Involving the Player Characters

Exactly how the player characters become involved in **One Fine Day....** is a matter for the DM to decide. It is quite possible that the reward of 2000gp offered by Merels on behalf of Sir Rubin could bring the matter to their attention. But there are a number of other methods for getting players involved in (solving) the murders:

1. The PCs are walking back to their lodgings one foggy evening when they are unsuccessfully attacked by the murderer (Sir Rubin). In the confusion and the fog, Sir Rubin escapes....
2. Another murder is committed. The body is discovered and in the subsequent hue and cry for the Militia, suspicion falls on the only outsiders present: the player characters.
3. A previous contact, or a relative of a player character falls victim to the murderer, and his or her heirs ask the player characters for aid.
4. If the PCs are lodging at the Ford Inn in Westmeet Square, their first knowledge of the murder will be a visit by the Borough District Militia checking on the first victim, Hurer Gardille. This course allows the murders to be introduced and assume greater importance over a period of weeks as Hurer's killer is not brought to book.

The Victims

The victims are a somewhat mixed bag, slaughtered by Sir Rubin because they happened to be in the neighbourhood of Piper's Corner when he was under the influence of the potion. As such, they do not have anything in common to link them as a group, although appearances are deceptive....

Naturally, if the player characters decide to investigate any possible common factors among the victims in an attempt to trace the murderer, the DM should let them do so, and perhaps even throw in a few 'red herrings'. They will receive no information at all from the District Militia.

The exact timescale of the killings is left to the DM, to fit in with the general flow of the campaign, but they occurred in the following order:

1. Hurer Gardille, the son of a minor official in Borth, was a random killing. He was on his way back to his lodgings at the Ford Inn (**5**) from the Theatre (**74**) when Sir Rubin struck. Nobody at the Ford knows much about him, except that he was a 'nice young man'.
2. Brendes Feergarl and his bear were in the employ of Augkusteen Hammardius, the actor-manager of Piper's Theatre. Their job was to entertain audiences before and after plays. They were both living in the stables of the theatre and Brendes kept himself to himself.
3. Juura Feergarl (no relation) was the Master of Music at Piper's Theatre. He lived at the Blue Piper and liked his drink — local opinion had it that he was due to drown unless he fell from the minstrel's gallery of the theatre and brained himself first. Popular character, no enemies.
4. Gurrit was a random killing. A linkboy, he was waiting to light the way home for theatre-goers when he was killed. Something of an urchin, nobody in Piper's Corner knows where he lived.
5 & 6. Breda and Shae were two dancers from Piper's Theatre, where they were currently lodged. Killed on consecutive evenings, the bodies were not discovered for two days, so it was assumed that the girls were out with 'gentlemen friends'. None of their 'gentlemen friends' has come forward since the girls were killed.
7. Dianel Oppes was another apparently random victim. A scribe and occasional employee of Luchael Alluminor, the bookseller, he tended to spend many of his hours slumped over his cup at the Blue Piper or working in the shop, where Luchael allowed him to sleep. A drunk and wastrel with considerable (wasted) talent as a pen-man.
8. Soe, another dancer from Piper's Theatre, was killed at the stage door as she was going to fetch a jug of ale for Augkusteen.

9. Burdock just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Ostensibly a street entertainer, playing the flute (very badly) for all those who would not throw him a copper or two, Burdock was the eyes of the Borough District Militia in the Piper's Corner area, quietly watching the doings of all the inhabitants.
10. Aybhe was the fourth dancer from Piper's Theatre to lose her life; actually murdered on the stage of the theatre and left hanging from the minstrel's gallery, the last victim (to date) of Sir Rubin.
11. The last corpse to be found was that of Isbee, Rendoulf Breek's journeyman. He had been stabbed and the corpse then beaten to hide the wound. Isbee was killed on the same night as Aybhe because the journeyman made a suggestive remark about Mosaiche, which deeply angered Ellucasim. So far everyone has assumed that this killing is just one more in the sequence of violence.

The adventurers will find it very difficult to cast any **raise** spells on the victims, as they have all been buried except for the two most recent victims. The temple authorities will object to any such behaviour on their premises, and the District Militia are operating in sufficient numbers in the area to prevent the PCs indulging in excessive unlawful behaviour (but not in such numbers that will stop the sudden and brutal murders). If **speak with dead** is cast, the results of any conversations with the dead should be ambiguous and largely meaningless. None of the victims saw Sir Rubin during the attacks, and they are all more concerned with finding comfortable resting places than worrying about the mundane concerns of the living. Isbee did recognise his killer, and will name him if asked. The DM should allow the players to interpret this piece of data in any manner they chose.

Rumours

Violent death has become the (almost only) topic of conversation among the usually gossipy inhabitants of Piper's Corner, and taproom detectives have held forth at great length on all aspects of the grisly matter. The Borough District Militia have been remarkably quiet about the whole affair, other than to say that the matter is 'in hand', which has further fueled ill-informed and prejudiced speculation. Their working hypothesis is that the murders are a vendetta against the Theatre, and most of their efforts are directed this way. Other than general agreement that the killings are the work of a complete madman, and that new locks are the order of the day, little agreement exists and new suspicions have been added to old dislikes.

In casual conversation and when questioned, NPCs will know 1-3 of the following rumours and items of misinformation which, in most cases, they will be only too pleased to share with the adventurers:

1. The victims visited the arena regularly and they all won a relatively large sum on a single chariot race (false).
2. All the victims had blue eyes and fair hair (partially true, the theatre dancers had dyed blonde hair and Dianel Oppes had white hair).
3. 'Mosaiche is a vampire. After all, she is never seen outside without her veil....' (false).
4. Somebody in Piper's Corner is a werewolf (false, and the speaker will always refuse to name a specific somebody).
5. 'It's those two from Bereduth.... never did trust outsiders....' (partially true, as Sir Rubin is the murderer, but the accusation is based on prejudice rather than reason).
6. All the killings are the work of the Thieves' Guild (false).
7. All the killings are the work of the Knights Ocular (false, and this suspicion will only be voiced by the very drunk or very stupid).
8. 'Things have never been the same since Rendoulf Breeks and that foreign wife of his bought Djon's shop....' (partially true, as Rendoulf/Angstear is the cause of all the mischief).
9. 'There is something not quite right about that boy Ellucasim....' (true, he murdered Isbee and is infatuated with Mosaiche).
10. It must be political. The Borough Militia have been warned off by a high-and-mighty in the Punctilio (false).
11. 'There are five strangers at the Blue Piper, but they couldn't have anything to do with it....' (true, see **The Plot Thickens** below).
12. Ordo or Crenafer are the killers. They have shocking tempers (false, although both are given to fits of rage).

The Plot Thickens

Staying at the Blue Piper are five mysterious people, the source of some casual talk in the neighbourhood, although everyone agrees that they are just eccentric foreigners, because they arrived only three days ago, after the murders started. Never appearing in public without heavy cloaks and yashmaks, keeping to their rooms, saying little and apparently never eating or drinking, their money is the right colour so they are left to their own devices.

So far, nobody has connected the appearance and habits of these strangers with those of Mosaiche, Rendoulf's wife. The connection is quite valid, as she and they are drow, dark elves.

When using the **D&D** game, treat drow as the functional equivalent of elves in most respects, save that they are as evil as most ordinary elves are good. Physically they are little different, except for their black skins and pale hair. Drow are extremely sensitive to light.

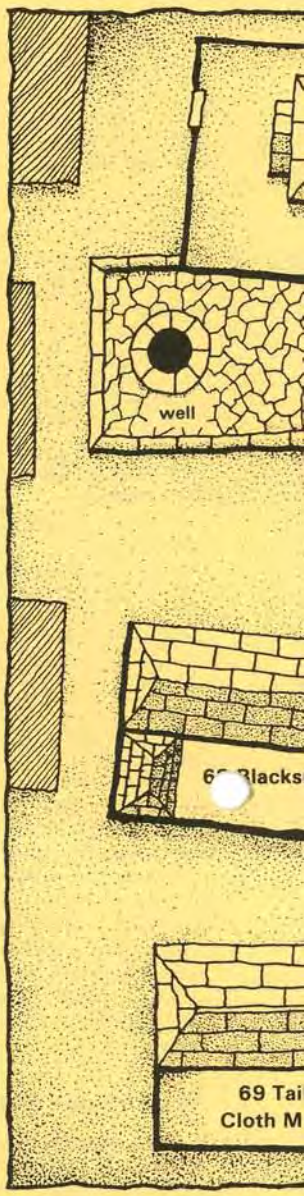
Mosaiche humiliated her clan by associating with Rendoulf, a mere human, and the clan mothers exiled her. However, because of the rivalry inherent in drow society, it was inevitable that exposure of her indiscretion would become the strategy of another clan. The drow at the Blue Piper have come to kidnap Mosaiche, take her home and humiliate her — and by extension her clan — by extracting a public confession of her 'degradation'.

The drow know she is married to a human who pretends to be a seller of herbs somewhere in the Borough. They do not yet know that their target is literally yards away, hampered as they are by their dislike of sunlight and difficulties of fitting into human society.

Their actions depend largely on those of the adventurers. They want to kidnap Mosaiche, not cause trouble with lesser breeds, so if dealt with openly they will be co-operative, but not very imformative. They know nothing of life in the League, and wish to know even less, other than where they can find Mosaiche. They do know that Angstear is a priest of Pharastus, so an exchange of information is possible: Mosaiche's whereabouts for Rendoulf/Angstear's true identity and evil beliefs.

Once they find Mosaiche (the DM should assume they do so after 3-4 days if the adventurers have not dealt with them by then) they will break into the Apothecary and kidnap her. The shop will then be fired and one of the male drow killed and his body burnt beyond recognition to provide the expected corpse.

The drow never use their names when outsiders are present, and always defer to the authority of Coreniashe.



The D&D game:

Corenaishe: AC 7; Elf 7; hp 25; MV 150' (50'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Elf +2; ML 12; AL C; XP 1250; THACO 15; Spells — **charm person, magic missile, sleep, continual darkness, mirror image, fire ball, wall of fire**; armed with dagger and one-handed crossbow (see below).
Doriade, her sister: AC 5; Elf 5; hp 18; MV 150' (50'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Elf +2; ML 12; AL C; XP 425; THACO 17; Spells — (as C5) **cause light wounds, cause fear, blight, hold person**; armed with flail, Doriade keeps a black widow spider (AC 9, hp 1, #AT 1 D poison — save vs poison at -4 or die) in a finely wrought silver cage at her belt.
Borendene, Despene and Grene, the males: AC 5; Elf 2; hp 9; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 or 2; D by weapon; Save as Elf +2; ML 12; AL C; XP 3[illegible] THACO 19; armed with daggers, shortswords and one-handed crossbows, Grene has the abilities of a Thief 5.

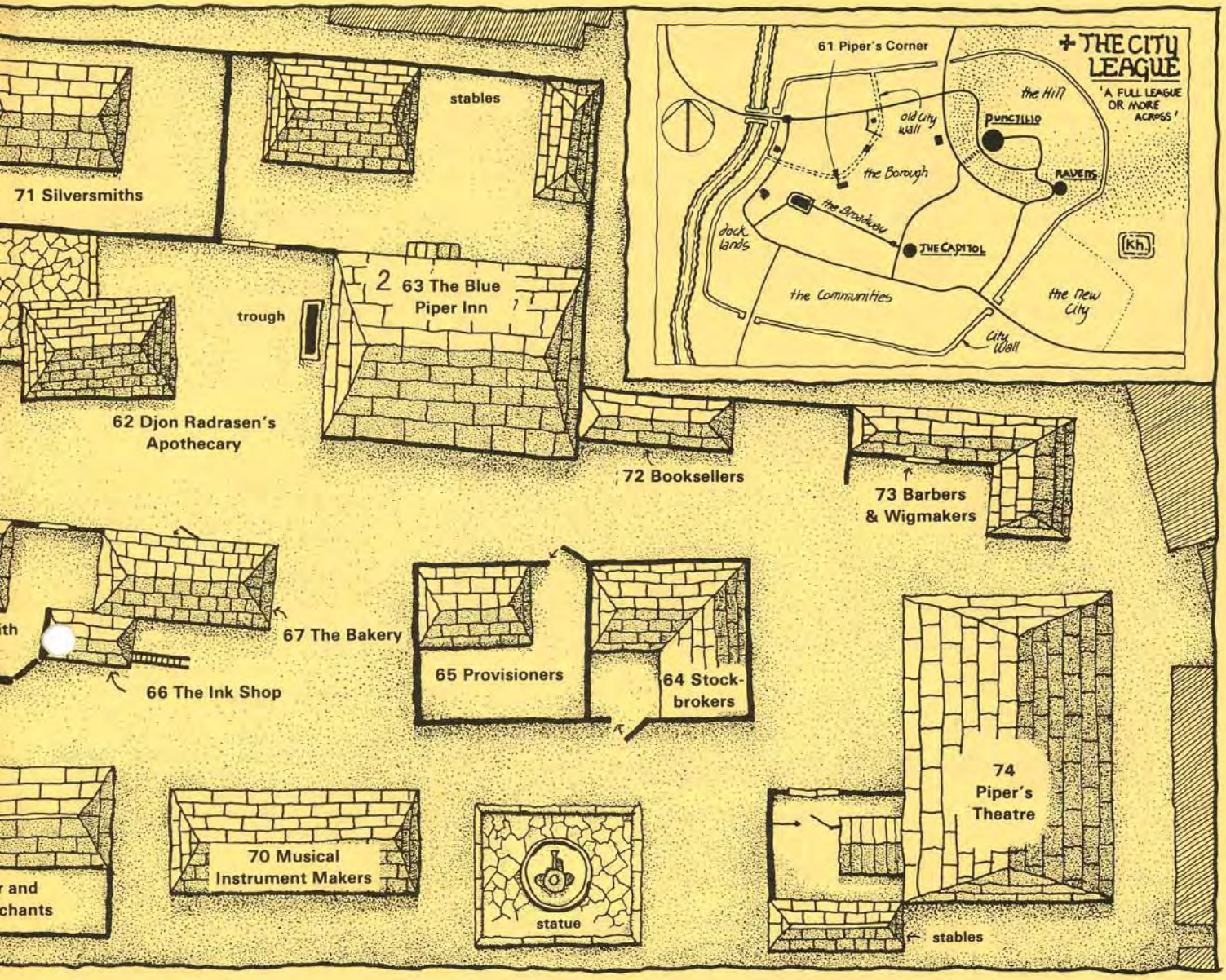
All drow can cast **faerie fire** (see **Companion** rules), **darkness, detect magic, know alignment** and **levitate**. In addition, the females can cast **clairvoyance, dispel magic** and **ESP**.

When in bright light drow attack at -2, and suffer a -2 penalty to their saving throws against light-based spells.

The AD&D game:

Corenaishe: AC 7; MV 15'; HD 7; hp 30; #AT 1; D by weapon; SA spells (as MU 7) — **affect normal fires, burning hands, feather fall, read magic, darkness 15' radius, detect invisibility, invisibility, fireball, hold person, wall of fire**; Int High; AL CE; Size M ; xp 1140; THACO 13; armed with dagger and one-handed crossbow (see below).
Doriade, her sister: AC 5; MV 15'; HD 5; hp 25; #AT 1; D by weapon; SA Spells (as C5) — **curse, cause light wounds, darkness, hold person, obscure alignment, silence 15' radius, cause blindness**; Int High; AL CE; Size M; xp 450; THACO 15; armed with flail; Doriade keeps a black widow spider (AC 10, hp 1, #AT 1 SD poison — save vs poison at -4 or die) in a finely wrought silver cage at her belt.
Borendene, Despene and Grene, the males: AC 5; MV 12'; HD 2; hp 17 each; #AT 1 or 2; D by weapon; Int High; AL CE; Size M; xp 99 each; THACO 16; armed with daggers, shortswords and one handed crossbows; Grene has the abilities of a Thief 5.

All drow can cast **dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, detect magic, know alignment**, and **levitate**. In addition the females can cast **clairvoyance, suggestion, dispel magic, detect lie**.



Drow crossbows have a range of 6' and fire bolts (D1-3) coated with a substance that causes those affected to fall unconscious. The weapons and equipment belonging to these drow has been away from the radiations of their caverns for too long and has lost its special properties. For the purposes of this adventure drow magic resistance is also assumed to be 'lost'. Finally, when in bright light drow attack at -2, and suffer a -2 penalty to their saving throws against light-based spells.

61 PIPER'S CORNER

All the identification numbers in the module are part of the City League numbering system, and references to people and places not detailed in this adventure can be found in previous issues of **IMAGINE** magazine. They are included so that the Piper's Corner area may be used by DMs as a standard part of the City League before, during and after the murderous events of **One Fine Day....** have run their course.

Piper's Corner, so named because (according to the locals) several ogres (the number varies depending upon the teller) were **charmed** to sleep by the Piper, thus saving the area from a terrible fate. The statue of the Piper and the Corner's well form the social centres of the area, where neighbours meet to chew the fat, (occasionally) row with each other and enjoy the irregular (but frequent) public holidays.

Piper's Corner is a tightly knit community in the middle of the Boroughs. It is pleasantly sleepy for some of the day, but has a thriving afternoon and evening trade thanks to Piper's Theatre. The houses are all spotless and well-maintained, with a general air of self-satisfied prosperity. Naturally, since the murders began the area has become somewhat quieter after dark, with few people venturing out unless they absolutely have to do so.

Normally, apart from people going to performances at Piper's Theatre, the most noticeable presence on the streets is that of Kulig (**61a**) and his Borough (District) Militia, who are there to discourage pickpockets and other street criminals taking too close an interest in the audiences at Piper's Theatre (**74**) and — of course — to try and halt the run of killings.

61a Boroughward Kulig; M; F4; L/LN

shortsword, knobbed stick; AC 7; hp 18/22

H		
S	15	☐ *Short, very smart in Borough livery*
I	14	☐ *Investigator and patrol leader*
W	12	☐ *Honest, jovial, shrewd 'street cop', very observant,*
D	10	*methodical investigator*
C	13	☐ *Well known locally, but particularly friendly with Pip*
Ch	16	*Aleknight (**63a**) and Flinn (**61b**); having an affair with Xinthea (**63c**)*

Kulig's patrol is made up of 6 first level fighters (hp 7/9), who normally wear everyday clothes rather than District Militia livery.

61b Flinn; F; T2; N/NG

two daggers; AC 5/6; hp 6/8

H		
S	12	☐ *'Tomboy', scruffy jerkin over black leathers*
I	14	☐ *Pickpocket and Militia informant*
W	10	☐ *Streetwise teenage punk, but with a heart of gold*
D	17	☐ *Friendly rivalry/co-operation with Kulig (**61a**), who never*
C	12	*punishes her when he catches her in other people's*
Ch	15	*pockets; in return she passes on bits of tittle-tattle that she has heard; knows everyone in the area (by sight), and friendly with Jooble (**74b**) and Netta (**74d**); hates Sivanus (**74c**) because of his treatment of Netta*

62 Djon Radrasen's Apothecary

Rendoulf Breeks stocks a wide range of herbs, spices, preserves, simples, medicinal preparations, comfits, tonics and coloured waters in this pleasant building. The Apothecary also stocks small quantities of the commoner herbs needed as spell components by wizards, as well as a discrete selection of so-called 'recreational' preparations.

Unknown to any in Piper's Corner, the cellar of the shop is no longer a storeroom, but a temple to Pharastus, where Rendoulf/Angstear performs acts of illicit worship, with the connivance of Mosaiche.

A thorough search will reveal a blue potion (the mind-altering drug). Rendoulf will claim it is a tonic for reducing the heat of blood, although if other apothecaries or herbalists are asked, they will not have heard of such a preparation. Anyone who drinks the potion will first collapse, then become violent for a period of 1-6 hours, then fall into a deep sleep. Afterwards — most worrying of all — the imbiber will remember nothing of what occurred while under the influence of the drug.

Rendoulf/Angstear is willing to lay down his life, or anyone else's, for Pharastus. If anyone gets close to the truth about the murders, he will do whatever is necessary to silence them or make good his escape.

62a **Rendoulf Breeks (Angstear);** M; C9; C/CE
no weapon; AC 9/10; hp 28/36

H
S 10 ☐ *Wears normal working clothes, leather apron, green hose*
I 16 ☐ *Owner of Djon Radresen's Apothecary, secret and fanatical cleric of Pharastus*
W 18
D 9 ☐ *Appears kind and slow witted; sly, cautious, and ruthless*
C 12 ☐ *Known by all inhabitants of Piper's Corner*
Ch 11

62b **Mosaiche;** F; E8/MU8-F4; C/CE
AC 9/10; hp 28/26

Drow
S 17 ☐ *Only appears in public wearing a black yashmack; deep red silk robes*
I 18
W 9 ☐ *Wife of Angstear, former drow noblewoman*
D 12 ☐ *Foolish, headstrong, very very violent*
C 14 ☐ *None in League, knows only Rendoulf/Angstear and Ellucasim*
Ch 17

Spells memorised:

	D&D:	AD&D:
1	1 (1*, 2, 6*, 8, 9, 11)	1 (1, 3*, 6, 12, 16*, 22, 30)
2	2 (1*, 5, 9, 10*, 11*)	2 (3*, 6, 14, 17*, 22, 23*)
3	3 (2*, 3, 6, 11*)	3 (2, 4*, 12*, 18, 22)
4	4 (1, 6, 8*, 9, 10*)	4 (7*, 16, 18*, 21)

62c **Ellucasim** is Rendoulf's apprentice and is infatuated with the mysterious Mosaiche, to the point of killing Isbee over a chance remark made about her. Mosaiche and Rendoulf know of the murder, but their devotion to Pharastus is such that they will say nothing about it.

63 The Blue Piper Inn

The Blue Piper is a homely and comfortable place, catering to theatre audiences and the locals alike. Because of its popularity with the slightly-better-off, prices for drinks, food and lodgings are between 150-200% of normal, with noticeable price rises coming into effect as Piper's Theatre (**74**) empties and the Inn takes over the custom.

63a **'Pip' Pere Aleknight;** M; Fr 3; L/LN
knobbed stick; AC 9/10; hp 11

½E
S 12 ☐ *Very smart, spotless apron over blue and yellow chequered jerkin and hose*
I 11
W 15 ☐ *Innkeeper*
D 13 ☐ *Nauseatingly bluff and hearty, sees much, says little*
C 14 ☐ *Well known among League landlords for his upwardly flexible pricing policy; knows everyone except Mosaiche (**62b**) in Piper's Corner; very friendly with Kulig (**61a**) and Angkusteen Hammardius (**74a**); dislikes Rendoulf Breeks (**62a**) because the man is a quack.*
Ch 14

63b-f **Maerie, Xinthea** and **Dewn** are the serving girls, professionally friendly, but vain creatures. Xinthea is very much in love with Kulig (**61a**) and jealous of his friendship with Flinn (**61b**). **Perrin** and **Norbet** are the cellarman and ostler respectively. Norbet was fond of Soe, Sir Rubin's third victim, and he has taken to drinking too much since she was killed.

63g **Sir Rubin Hewd;** M; P9; L/LG
longsword +2; AC 9/10; hp 45/55

H
S 13 ☐ *Tall and distinguished, but weary, fevered and bedridden*
I 9 ☐ *Liegeman to Count Nortus d'Erebia of Bereduth*
W 13 ☐ *Loyal, honest and noble, terribly worried about the murders*
D 14
C 9 ☐ *Friendly with all at the Blue Piper, particularly Grame Merels(63h); friendly with Rendoulf (**62a**) and Ellucasim (**62c**) in the mistaken belief that they are helping him*
Ch 18

The fact that Sir Rubin is ill is a clue that something is seriously wrong. **Detect lie** and similar truth-finding spells will yield misleading results because Sir Rubin does not know that he is the killer (and it would be a harsh judge who condemned the man if all the facts were known).

If the adventurers have no luck in establishing that Sir Rubin is the murderer within two or three days, the DM should assume that he is given another dose of the potion and goes out hunting again. This time one of the NPCs sees a tall figure fleeing from the scene back towards the Blue Piper.

The DM should note that the drow described in **The Plot Thickens** occupy two adjacent rooms on the top floor of the Blue Piper Inn.

63h **Grame Merels** is Fr2, hp 6 and a half-elf. Although giving the impression of an absent minded (somewhat untidy) school master, Grame is very sharp indeed. His only fault is that he tends to see the best in people rather than the truth.

64 The Stockbrokers

64a-c **Yond Karryson** and his son **Witsul** are both Fr4, hp 10 and dwarves. They make a handsome living out of trading in shares in various business ventures, specialising in high risk, high gain maritime projects. Customers buy shares in the various projects, speculating on the potential return from their investments while the Karrysons take a tithe as commission. **Jimes Panderly** is Fr2, hp 7, their book keeper and junior partner, and he looks after the simple business of betting on horse and chariot races, the Arena, Guild elections, the outcome of court cases, who the Piper's Corner murderer might be, etc. In fact, he is willing to offer odds on absolutely anything.

65 Provisioners

65a-b **Duestine Scrannel** sells every sort of fresh and preserved foodstuff that can be imagined during the morning. During the afternoon and evening she and her apprentice **Melcom** sell cooling drinks (mulled ale and wine in winter) and snacks to those visiting Piper's Theatre. They also have what they regard as an amusing sideline in that they supply old fruit and vegetables to theatre critics.

66 The Ink Shop

66a-b This rather small and less than imposing building is the home and shop of **Corvellas of Xir** and **Greer**, his dwarven colourgrinder, (both are Fr2, hp 6). Corvellas of Xir is very particular about whom he sells to, but his wares are the finest inks for all purposes, including many rare and exotic ones highly prized by magic users for their uses on scrolls and spell books. Greer is an expert on all such substances, and both she and Corvellas will pay good prices for components of interesting magical inks.

The DM should note that Corvellas and Greer will be willing to talk about inks and their compounds and they will name drop shamelessly about the clients they have had (Sendrennial the Puissant, Cerwyn Master of Magics, for example) including, oddly enough, Rendoulf Breeks (**62a**), who bought some very expensive ink used in spell books. Neither of the two has any idea why an apothecary like Rendoulf should want such an exotic substance.

67 Bakery

67a-d **Jothre Crimp** and **Ouphe** are, by their own admission, possibly the finest bakers and piemakers in the Boroughs. Helped by their teenage twin sons **Pyclet** and **Mouphin**, the couple have built up a thriving trade in midnight snacks for homeward-bound theatre-goers. Their most famous meat-pie, the 'Crimp's Special', is universally regarded as unsurpassed in tastiness, although no-one has been able to extract the exact recipe — or even details of what meat is used....

Jothre and Ouphe are especially friendly with Alee (**73a**) and Hanar (**73b**); the couples often dine together at the bakery.

68 Blacksmith

68a-c **'Iron' Tardy** is a broad, handsome middle aged man with strong hands and a good eye for metal work. In addition to shoeing horses, making tools and implements, and fine wrought iron work, he also turns out the occasional swordblade, just to keep his skill in trim — nothing fancy, but good, honest steel. **Bregan Retvis** does not want to be a blacksmith, but has little choice but to work out his indentured apprenticeship. Bregan would like to be an actor, but will settle for

anything more refined than working in a smithy. He is secretly in love with Flinn (**61b**), but believes (rightly) that she would have nothing to do with him. **Ordo** is a pleasant, well meaning, but very *big* clod, given to fits of terrible violence. He doesn't know about anything other than working the bellows, and is happy with the thought of being a blacksmith, providing somebody tells him what to do.

69 Tailor and Cloth Merchant

69a-d Although the business started by selling only pieces of finished woollen cloth from Cerwyn, **Niarris di Borth** has increased the range of his interests, with the tacit approval of the Cerwyn Clothiers Guild and the tacit disapproval of the City League Clothiers Guild. Niarris is convinced that the League Guild is out to 'get him', so, while polite, he always maintains his distance. Niarris is a shrewd trader.

His reputation for quality clothes is based on the skill of **Touby** the cutter, **Mawmet** the seamstress and **Rias**, the finisher. These three live to produce beautiful garments, and take no interest in other matters. They spend some spare time at Piper's Theatre (**74**) and the Blue Piper Inn (**63**), on the look out for new styles and fashions.

70 Musical Instrument Makers

This building stands out from the others in Piper's Corner, not because it is exactly delapidated, just uncared for; the windows are unwashed and some roof tiles have slipped. The main workroom is piled with musical instruments of all kinds. Once the centre of a thriving group of craftsmen, only Crenafer remains here.

70a **Crenafer;** M; Fr 2; N/NG
no weapon; AC 9/10; hp 5
½E

S	7	☐ *Unkempt, scruffy, stained minstrel's garb*
I	14	☐ *Instrument maker, drug addict*
W	9	☐ *Slow and slurred, violent temper when crossed, shy and*
D	13	*ashamed of what he has become, proud of his (still*
C	14	*excellent) abilities with lyre and lute*
Ch	6	☐ *Afraid of Augkusteen Hammardius (**74a**), Kulig (**61a**) and Rendoulf Breeks (**62a**) as the Apothecary might one day refuse him drugs; friendly with no-one except his cat*

Crenafer keeps himself to himself, emerging from the shop only to buy herbal preparations and drugs from Rendoulf Breeks and food from Duestine Scrannel (**65a**). The source of his money (in fact, his life savings) is a subject of speculation amongst the other inhabitants of Piper's Corner, as is his habit of spending most nights playing his lute while under the influence of the drugs from the Apothecary.

71 Silversmiths

71a-c **Mardic**, **Cardne** and **Pooreis** Doit are members of the Guild of Silverworkers, despite producing silver work only on commission and of a rather indifferent quality.

The true skill of the three brothers (all are Fr3, hp 5) lies in the production of silver payment tokens (not true coins) for use by the journeymen and apprentices of various Guilds throught the City. Most traders and merchants will only accept tokens from their own Guilds, which means that paying junior Guild members in this fashion keeps them permanently out-of-pocket and loyal to their Guild.

72 Booksellers

72a-b Although the building is outwardly unprepossessing, **Luchael Alluminor** and his journeyman assistant **Micifer** run a well-organised and somewhat eclectic bookshop. Theatrical scripts (especially works by Augkusteen Hammardius) and sheet music form the main stock of the shop, but the two also have an interest in historical works (they have a complete edition of Iacub's *Words to A Visiting Prince* of which it has taken Micifer two years to produce an illuminated copy), and bestiaries. Despite the fact that they are supposed to be running a shop, the two are inveterate collectors and will pay good prices for interesting works.

73 Barbers and Wigmakers

73a-c **Alee** and **Hanar** run a small hairdressers and wigmakers. Alee is a gossip to those who are under his scissors (he will know 3-6 of the murder rumours given above), but is a rather sinister figure at first sight with a long scar running down his face. This is a legacy of his younger days as a horse mercenary (F4, hp 16/20).

Hanar and **Nitily**, the apprentice, make wigs from the good quality hair from the shop, and have a good sideline supplying costume wigs to theatricals such as Augkusteen Hammardius' company and, more discreetly, to those who need a disguise — thieves, assassins, spies and, so it is quietly rumoured, the Knights Ocular.

Hanar often receives bundles of food from her farmer cousin from Hyrpum. She is in the habit of taking these to the bakery for Ouphe (**67b**) to cook, so there is some local speculation as to what might actually be in the sacks. The DM should feel free to encourage the adventurers in assuming that Alee, Hanar and the Crimps (**67a-d**) might be engaged in a Sweeney Todd-like enterprise, turning visitors to the barber's shop into a variety of tasty pies....

74 Theatre

Piper's Theatre is nowhere near the biggest or most imposing in the City League, but the quality of the dramatic productions put on under the auspices of Augkusteen Hammardius is of the highest. Low and high comedies and tragedies, concerts, farces and sheer extravagances such as masques have all been presented at one time or another, and Augkusteen Hammardius' own *Night of the Jewels*, a comedy of errors set in a Thieves' Guild, is still occasionally mentioned as one of the funniest plays in years.

Piper's Theatre is small and intimate, with seating only for the selected few in the upper gallery and at the back. The main pit in front of the stage is an open area, where the most fashionable cliques go to see the latest productions (and well-loved favourites) and be seen.

At the moment, performances are taking place to audiences of just a few dozen, the brave and the foolhardy — and the ghoulish who hope to see something more true to life enacted in the Theatre. Ten District Militiamen will be the most conspicuous members of the crowd.

74a Augkusteen Hammardius; M; Fr 4; N

longsword; AC 9/10; hp 13

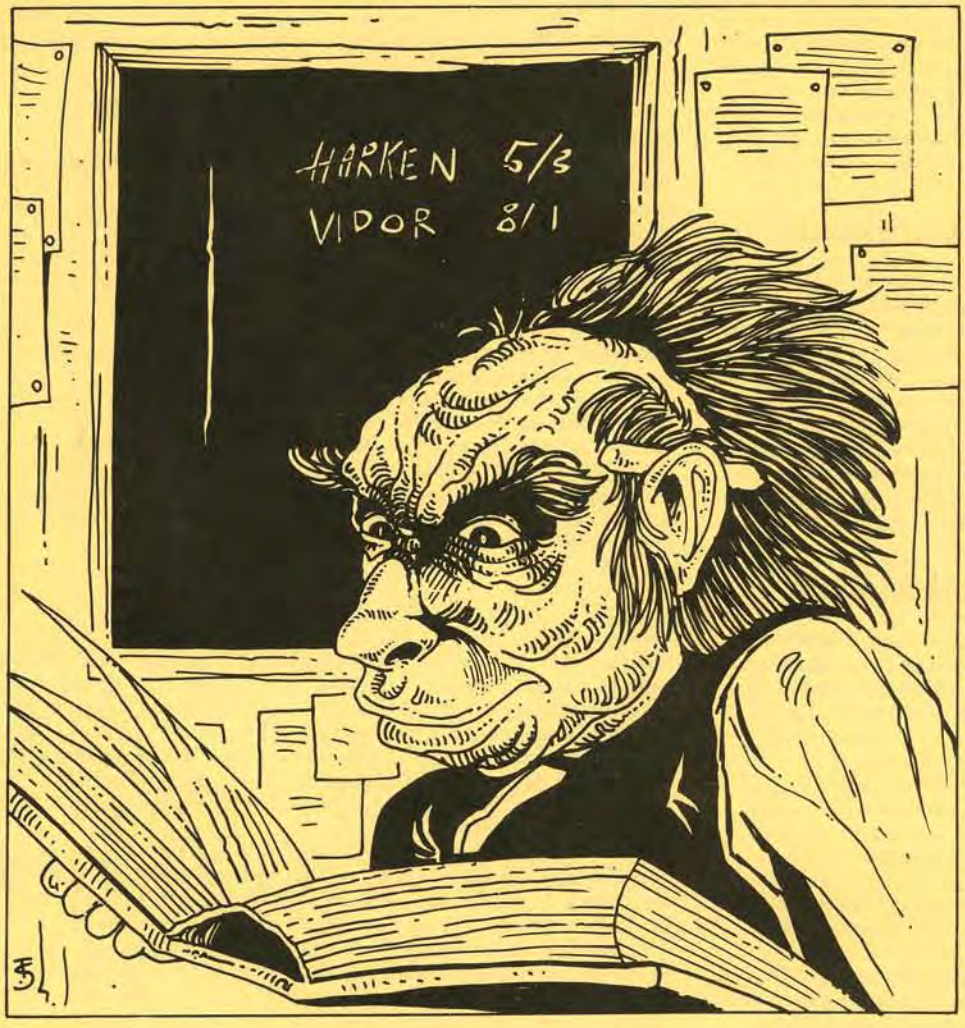
H
S 11 ☐ *Smart, but cut of his clothes is 20 years out of date*
I 16 ☐ *Thespian, actor-manager and dramatist, rumoured to be a spy for the Knights Ocular (but who believes such an expansive ham would be employed for such purposes?)*
W 9
D 14
C 12 ☐ *Speaks with a clear ringing tone (as though constantly on stage), sensitive and vain, appalling ham actor but excellent administrator and writer, holds the concept of Theatre above all else, devotee of the Temple of Hrea, deeply upset by killings, but still a witty and amusing man*
Ch 16 ☐ *Knows and is known by all in Piper's Corner; member of the Thespian's Guild and tolerated on an informal associate basis by the Guild of Scribes and Lexicographers; friendly with all his staff (**74b-d**) and Pip Aleknight (**63a**) and thinks that he and Kulig (**61a**) are friends; dislikes Duestine Scrannel (**65a**); hates Crenafer (**70a**) enough to strike him in public on several occasions for becoming an embarrassment to the 'profession'.*

74b Jooble the Zany; M; K9/F9; L/LN

dagger +3; AC 2/2; hp 50/59

H
S 14 ☐ *Jester's motley over **leather armour +2**, bladder on a stick*
I 16 ☐ *Slapstick clown, comic actor, agent for the Knights Ocular*
W 13 ☐ *Professional bouncing flippant idiot and archetypal sad clown, sees everything and says nothing*
D 18
C 15 ☐ *Popular with everyone in Piper's Corner except Rendoulf Breeks (**62a**), Niarris di Borth (**69a**) and Luchael Alluminor (**72a**); particularly friendly with Angkusteen (**74a**), Pip Aleknight (**63a**) and Flinn (**61b**); dislikes and distrusts Sivanus (**74c**)*
Ch 11

These two are the only remaining actors in Piper's Theatre, which is causing problems of an artistic nature to add to those of the more physical side. Augkusteen has quickly written a play with just two characters about a dancer and the two men who pursue her. Only Augusteen and Jooble actually speak — Netta is merely seen dancing in the background. The irony of this performance is that the Thespians Guild is considering giving the play an award.



74c Sivanus the Magnificent; F; E1/MU1; N/N(E)

dagger +1; AC 8/9; hp 4

E
S 10 ☐ *Tall, sinister, dresses in blacks and greys*
I 16 ☐ *Fancymaster in charge of magical and theatrical effects*
W 12 ☐ *Sulky, silent, unctiously polite, hates everyone, never uses a kind word when a cruel one will do; secretly approves of (and even admires) the murderer*
D 15
C 14
Ch 16 ☐ *Knows Fiorrantanis (**9b**) and Dispor the True (**9c**) as they taught him magic; superficially friendly with the staff at Piper's Theatre, currently 'lives with' Netta (**74d**) at the theatre, but beats her cruelly; fascinated by Mosaiche (**62b**) but even he doesn't know why....*

Spells memorised:
D&D: 1 (8, 9, 12*)
AD&D: 1 (1, 5, 22, 29*) plus cantrips (see **IMAGINE** magazines #8 & 9)

74d Netta; F; Fr1; N/NG

no weapon; AC 9/10; hp 2

H
S 12 ☐ *Very tall and very slender, wears gauzy dresses and silk scarfs*
I 9
W 9 ☐ *Dancer*
D 17 ☐ *A superb dancer, but a scared and nervous woman in the light of the fate of her four companions. Infatuated with Silvanus (**74c**), believes he will protect her from the murderer, and that he will take her from this miserable place to dance for the Katar....*
C 9
Ch 15 ☐ *Her parents live in High Lygol, and she has no close kin in the League; lives with Silvanus; occasionally slips away to the Cornucopia to watch people arriving.*

Ending the Adventure

The exact end of the adventure is left largely to the discretion of the DM. Should Sir Rubin, Rendoulf or Ellucasim be uncovered as killers the DM can use the trial procedure decribed in **Law and Order** in **IMAGINE** magazine #19. Needless to say, a case of this complexity, and involving a foreign national, will be heard at the Court of Ten Thousand Ravens. It is also likely to be an epic, since the City League legal system is unlikely to be able to find Sir Rubin innocent of murder, nor Rendoulf guilty of anything much beyond assault. Several of the City's religious orders will probably be queuing up to try Rendoulf for blasphemy however, and since there is a chance he could face a murder charge on the strength of his conspiracy (being a servant of Pharastus could make him technically guilty), the whole thing will end up in a hopeless legal spiral, like so many other cases, while Rendoulf and Sir Rubin languish in jail. This offers a number of possibilities to the PCs — releasing Sir Rubin as a sign of the good nature, or because of a healthy bribe from Bereduth, or releasing Rendoulf into the hands of the church of Tarmenel....

Whatever the outcome of his trial (should he be caught) Sir Rubin, noble and true to the last, will instruct Grame Merels to pay the reward to his captors. Rendoulf/Angstear will be considerably less charitable about the whole affair, swearing eternal vengeance upon everyone involved. Whether this 'eternal vengeance' has any tangible form is for the DM to decide.... As for Ellucasim, the poor devil will probably confess and end up facing banishment, slavery, life imprisonment or perhaps death in the Arena. His last gesture as a free man might be to offer his life savings — at best 30-40gp — to anyone who will look after Mosaiche, or recover her from the hands of her enemies amongst the drow.

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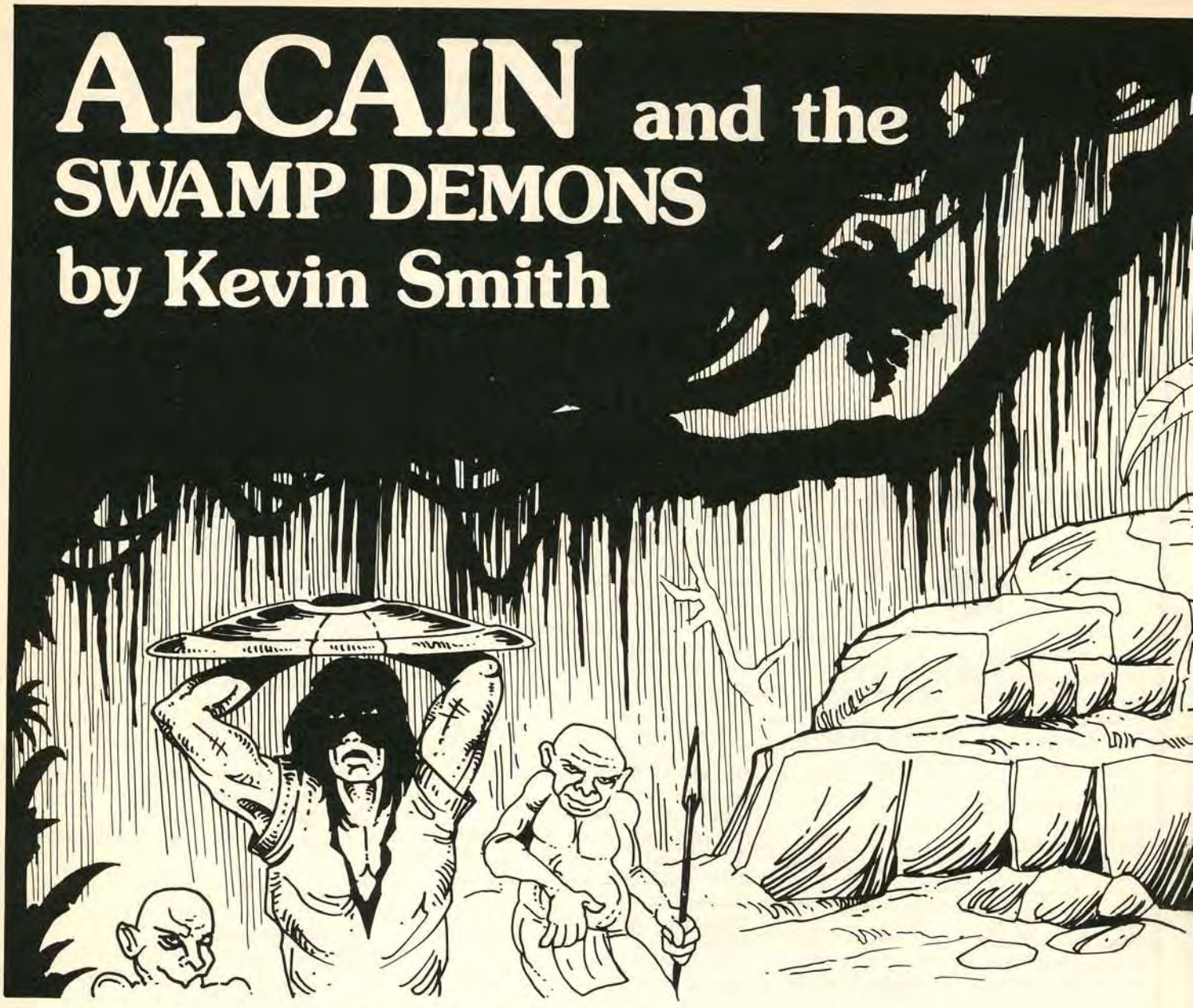
ALCAIN and the SWAMP DEMONS

by Kevin Smith



The elegant long-ship sliced through the waves at high speed, the warriors all pulling with immense skill and power on their oars. Their chieftain, Alcain, stood in the stern directing their progress with the almighty steering oar.

'Land ho!' he called out at last.

The long-ship instantly grounded and, such was its speed, shot thirty yards up the beach.

'There must be easier ways for him not to get his feet wet,' muttered one exhausted warrior to another.

They had marched inland about half a mile, Alcain leading the way, when they came across a deserted village. At least, Alcain presumed it was deserted since he could see no-one about.

'Careful, men,' said Alcain. 'Look to your weapons.

The men bunched together, tightened their grips on sword and axe handles, and stared at them intently. Alcain took a few more steps into the settlement. Suddenly, there was an immense sickening thud behind him. He whirled round. His men had been dropped on by a sixteen-ton lump of cold porridge!

As he stood there, bemused, bewildered and shaken, but not afraid, being too stupid, a multitude of small warriors appeared from the bushes and formed a circle with him at the centre.

'What do you reckon?' said one.

'Seems to fit,' said another.

'Certainly survived the Curse,' said a third.

There was an amount of muttering among the small men, and eventually the smallest was despatched into the forest.

'You will please come with us,' they said to Alcain.

'Alcain does nothing he does not wish to,' said Alcain, folding his arms and sniffing pointedly.

'You will please come with us to where our High Priestess, Most Beautiful of All Women, awaits you.'

'Well, as it happens I don't actually have any other pressing engagements just at the moment,' said Alcain. 'Lead on.'

He was led along a well-used path through the forest to a large stone building. It was a pity the path had only been well-used by the small men, and Alcain received several clouts across the head from low branches. He was pushed through the open doorway, and received another clout. There were no windows, and as his eyes became accustomed to the gloom he could make out the shadowy figure of a woman sitting on the high stone throne.

'You are he of whom the legends speak.'

Alcain was taken aback by the harsh, quavering voice.

'You're the High Priestess?' The gloom seemed to be dispersing. The High Priestess was an old hag, clad in drab, dusty grey. 'I was given to understand that you were the Most Beautiful of All Women.'

'I was,' said the Priestess. 'Nowadays the title is more, as you might say, honorary, more's the pity. Ninety years ago we could have had some fun together.' She looked wistfully into the distance.

'Ninety years ago?'

'I was a bright young thing of one-hundred-and-ten back then.'

Alcain hefted his axe. 'You mock me, old woman.'

'Oh put that axe down and listen to what I have say. The legends speak of a tall, dim — er — fair stranger who shall survive the Curse of this, the Isle of Doom! and deliver it from the Evil of the Swamp Demons. You are tall. You are — er — fair. You are stranger than most. And, you have survived the Curse.'

'That's what the small men said, too,' said Alcain. 'What is this Curse?'

'Any stranger setting foot on the Isle of Doom! brings down upon his head —

sixteen tons of cold porridge! In all the years, you alone have survived. You alone are the one to rid us of this terrible Evil!' She paused. 'Plays hell with our international trade, I can tell you.'

'If I refuse?'

'Porridge! And if you are going to refuse, can you go outside and do it? It'd take ages to clear sixteen tons of the stuff from in here.'

'Don't worry about that, oh no. I accept. I agree.'

The High Priestess began to prepare him for his task.

'You are permitted to take only three weapons, which you must choose yourself, from the Armoury.'

She descended from her throne and hobbled across to a door. Alcain followed her through, and immediately backed out again, red-faced and holding his hand over his ear.

'Can't an old woman have any privacy nowadays? I've been up on that cold draughty throne for hours. The Armoury's three doors along.'

The Armoury was a vast chamber filled with every weapon known to man. Alcain looked carefully over them all and finally decided on a longbow and arrows, a heavy two-handed sword, and his own axe. The Priestess surveyed his choice.

'Ah, the longbow. It is magic, and can shoot an arrow three times further than any other longbow in existence. You merely have to pull it three times as hard. The sword is wondrous also, and will chop down a tree with but a single blow... if you swing it hard enough. The axe... the axe I don't recognise.'

'It is my own.'

'You're quite sure you wouldn't like to choose something else?'

'Quite sure.'

'The Mystic Halberd of Tromnas, perhaps. Or Regana's Trident. There's a cruise missile over there you could have...'

'No, no, I'll take the axe.'

'Suit yourself. Now, I am also permitted to give you one gift of my own making. This way.'

She led him through the Armoury to a door at the other end. Alcain followed her, warily this time, and found himself in a room stinking of brimstone. For what seemed like hours, and probably was, she chanted spells and tossed unpleasant items into a small cauldron. At length she turned gleefully to him and said, 'Now the final deadly ingredient — potassium cyanide!'

The potion in the cauldron seethed and bubbled.

'When the tiniest drop of this potion touches someone, no matter who or what, he, she or it will be filled with an insatiable craving for brown windsor soup.'

'That's horrible,' said Alcain. 'Brown windsor soup hasn't been invented yet.'

The Old Priestess cackled gleefully. 'Is that so? Sometimes I don't know my own fiendishness.' This amused her for several minutes. Then she said, 'Go now — no, hang on, come back. I haven't told you where yet.'

Alcain turned back, looking slightly bemused; heroes normally had to find out everything for themselves on these quests.

'Make your way East into the forest,' said the old hag. 'About a day's journey away lies the Swamp of the Demons of the Swamp. Destroy the Demons and return.'

Alcain was suddenly filled with existential angst: did the Swamp belong to the Demons, or the Demons to the Swamp? Meanwhile, during this mere half hour of cogitation, the old Priestess had vanished into the gloom.

This meant that his first problem was to get out of the stone building. He looked around, and noticed on the wall an illuminated green sign reading 'Exit'. He stared at it with complete incomprehension, since he couldn't read. When he saw

the door beneath, he edged towards it, gripping his axe for comfort. The door swung open, and he rushed out into the daylight. There was no-one in sight. When he had recovered from the blinding glare of the sun there was still no-one in sight.

'Hm, no-one in sight,' he mused, and strode off into the forest. The small men appeared from their hiding places in the bushes and watched him with admiration.

'There goes a brave man,' said one.

'Yes,' agreed his neighbour. 'Though I'd be more convinced if he weren't going in the wrong direction.'

Alcain marched on, his bow slung across one shoulder, his quiver of arrows across the other, his sword in its scabbard by his side, his trusty axe in his right hand, and his lucky teddy bear in his left. He whistled as he went, and thought that it would be easier if the string of the magic bow didn't cut into his chest so much, and the scabbard of the magic sword didn't drag on the floor. There was always a catch to these magic objects. He thought, also, that it was rather strange, the similarity in the clumps of rock and vegetation along the way. When he passed a tall spiky outcrop for the fifth time, it dawned on him that he was walking in circles. As it was now becoming dark, he found a sheltered spot, built a fire, and settled down for the night, with his weapons close to hand and his teddy bear tucked under his chin.

He awoke at dawn. From where he lay he could see some rabbits feeding nearby. 'Breakfast,' he thought. Slowly he raised himself to a sitting position and reached towards his bow. From the bag it rested on he drew a spoon, bowl, bottle of milk, packet of sugar and box of cornflakes.

After breakfast, he broke camp and followed the dawn sun to the East. He had gone two miles when he realised he had forgotten his lucky teddy bear, and instantly turned back for it. Thus he avoided the great boulder that fell from the sky and embedded itself in the earth where he would have been. On his return with the teddy bear he noticed the boulder, since it lay in his path, and was puzzled by it. Surely it hadn't been there before. 'Avalanche,' he decided. Climbing over it, he carried on.

Five miles later, he came to a barbed wire fence. He thought for only a moment, then swung his mighty axe in a gleaming arc through the air. The shaft caught on the end of his bow, and tumbled him to the ground. He thought for a few moments more, then removed his other weapons and swung the axe again. The wire gave way before that ferocious blow, and then swung back unharmed. He swung again, and again, and again; and again. And again. And againagainagaingaingainainainnnn. Exhausted, he remembered that his magic sword could slice through a tree with but a single blow. He swung it at the wire, which gave way and returned exactly as before. Trees the sword could handle; barbed wire — no.

He felt a tap on his shoulder. 'I say old bean, what *are* you doing?'

Alcain turned hurriedly, and saw an enormous green dragon looming over him, blue-grey smoke curling ominously from its nostrils, and a monocle in one eye.

'Base villain!' roared Alcain. 'I shall go through this barrier by hook or by crook, and nothing shall prevent me. Stand ye back!'

'My dear chap,' replied the dragon, 'I have no intention of preventing you. But I would point out a gate, about thirty yards yonder...'

In embarrassed confusion, Alcain headed towards the gate, muttering something about know-all upper-class dragons. He was about to go through when a voice stopped him.

'Oi! Where d'yer think you're going?'

'Through here, varlet! I have a sacred duty to perform.'

'I don't care if yer going to yer own funeral. There's a form to fill in first.'

The speaker was a small gnome squatting on a mushroom behind a counter covered with bits of paper, forms, pens, pencils, rubber stamps and bottles of coloured ink. Cursing silently at the delay, Alcain went over to the counter.

'Cursing silently won't get yer through any quicker,' said the gnome. 'Now, name?'

Thinking fast, he unslung his bow and shot an arrow into a tree. Then he tied a rope to another arrow and shot that into a tree. Thinking fast had never been his strong point....

'Alcain,' said Alcain.

'Mr Al Cain. Address?'

'No, not Al Cain. Alcain. All one word!'

'The gnome raised his eyes to the heavens, and precisely, deliberately, tore the form in half. 'Let me guess. You're an 'ero come ter destroy the Evil of the Swamp, right?'

'Such is my task.'

'Gawd 'elp us!' He took another form, edged in black. 'Name: Alcain. Address: no fixed abode, by any chance?'

'Correct.'

'Occupation: 'ero.'

'And warrior chieftain,' said Alcain proudly. The gnome seemed singularly unimpressed as he wrote it down.

'Reason for entry: destruction of Evil of the Swamp. Now, who do we notify when yer fail to return?'

'But I shall return!' said Alcain.

'Don't give me that! Who do we notify?'

'The old High Priestess, I suppose.'

The gnome wrote it down, and then spent ten minutes stamping the form with nearly every rubber stamp on his counter. Alcain watched with mounting impatience, and finally slammed his fist down on the counter-top.

'Oh,' said the gnome from his mushroom. 'You still 'ere? This is just internal admin- urgghh! Now that,' said the gnome from the floor, 'won't do yer no good at all.'

Shortly afterwards, Alcain stumbled upon the Swamp. He knew it was the Swamp because of the foul stench of marsh gases, the horrendous stink of brimstone, the unmistakeable odour of Evil, and because he was in it up to his navel. Thinking fast, due to a strong instinct for self-preservation, he unslung his bow and shot an arrow into a nearby tree. Then he tied a rope to another arrow and shot that into the tree. Thinking fast had never been his strong point. Heaving on the rope, he slowly but surely pulled the arrow out of the tree. Trying again, he managed to secure the rope and save himself.

He stood by the edge of the Swamp, beginning to get an inkling of just how Evil it could be. Here he was, covered in stinking slime. How could he possibly be a hero, covered in stinking slime? A little filth he didn't mind; it was, in fact, obligatory. But this wasn't playing fair. What was he to do?

Casting his eyes around (a trick he had learned from the Southern Mystics) he spotted a small wooden hut. The sign over the door said, 'Charold Hu Chinese Laundry'. Alcain went inside.

'Nice talking sign you have there,' he said.

'Ah, thank you, sah,' said the oriental behind the counter.

'How long will it take to clean my armour and weapons?'

'Four days.'

'I can't wait four days!'

'No need to wait, sah. You go away, come back rater.'

Alcain waved his axe threateningly. 'I want this armour clean in half an hour.'

'Half hour? Okay. But cost extla.'

Alcain removed his armour and weapons and handed them over. Half an hour later he had them on again — resplendent and gleaming, and dripping wet.

' "Clean" you said,' said the oriental. 'Nothing in contlact about "dly".'

Alcain marched off, mumbling about smart-aleck laundrymen. Presently he came to a sign on which was written, 'Danger! You are now entering the Swamp of the Demons of the Swamp. (If you can't read, ask someone who can to read this to you.)'

Alcain looked around, failed to see anyone who could read, and therefore ignored the notice contemptuously. Then he had a sudden premonition of danger, which may have had something to do with the row of skeletons in armour hanging from gallows. He unslung his bow and notched an arrow. There was a sudden blue flash and a black-clad figure appeared. She gestured at a bush, which blushed and burst into flames.

'Intruder!' You have entered the Forbidden Swamp, and must pay. That'll be twelve gold bosons.'

'Twelve? Never!'

'Then you shall die!'

In a blur of motion, Alcain drew back the bow-string and loosed the arrow. The figure laughed scornfully and vanished before the arrow had travelled a yard. 'Fast, but not fast enough, mortal,' she said from out of the air. She reappeared six feet to the right. The arrow pierced her stomach.

'Just my luck to come up against an incompetent bowman,' she groaned, and fell forward — dead.

'One down,' said Alcain. 'I wonder how many more there are.'

'Enough to subdue you, mortal fool!' The harsh voice came from behind, but black-garbed figures had appeared all around him.

'With the simplest of spells I disarm you.' The Demon gestured, genuflected, gestured again. Alcain's bow became too hot to handle, so he dropped it. His sword and scabbard glowed red hot and burned through his belt. They fell to the ground, as did his trousers. The figures vanished and reappeared in front of a gaunt angular castle. Alcain realised no-one was watching him and made a break for the woods. He hadn't gone two yards when he tripped over his trousers.

'Boiled or roast?' said one Demon.

'Roast,' said another.

'In his jacket,' added a third .

A spell lifted him up and wafted him into the kitchen, setting him to rotate slowly high over the kitchen fire, on which sat a stew pot containing the Demons' lunch.

'He'll do well for supper, later on,' said a Demon, absent-mindedly sharpening a long carving knife.

Alcain felt something wet against his chest. He looked and saw drops of liquid falling into the pot, and realised it must be the Priestess's deadly potion. He fortunately forgot it affected everything it touched, and assumed he was immune. This it was that saved him.

The stew in the pot obligingly served itself out for lunch, and the pot washed itself and put itself away on the shelf. As the Demons ate, their eyes glazed over and they started drooling, 'Soup. Brown windsor soup. Brown windsor...' One by one, they ran off into the distance. The spell holding Alcain aloft became weaker and he slowly descended, wishing he weren't still over the fire.

'Well, that's that, then,' he said.

'Not quite, mortal. There is still one unaffected by your dastardly action.' The leader of the Demons stood before him, his face contorted with rage. 'You are clever, son of Adam, but you overlooked one vital fact. I am a vegetarian. I did not eat the stew.'

Alcain gasped in amazement. What was this 'son of Adam' rubbish? His father had been Thorgay the Beresker. But this thought had given the Demon time to chant a spell, and only Alcain's battle instincts saved him, bypassing, as they did, his brain. He dived to the left as lightning shot from the Demon's nose and incinerated a stool. His hand fell onto a battle-axe.

'Good and sharp,' he thought, licking the blood from his cut fingers. He grasped the handle and swung the axe in a glittering arc, just missing the Demon. But even so, the creature backed away. Alcain shuffled forward, swinging the axe lustily and never giving the Demon time to utter more spells, and never for an instant realising that this was what he was doing. Soon he had the Demon trapped in a corner, and drew back the axe for the final, fatal blow. He paused at the top of his backswing for the traditional moment of gloating, and the Demon seized his opportunity.

Quickly, he muttered a spell.

Alcain swung mightily, stepping forward to add extra force. Also to bring himself close enough to connect.

The Demon unleashed a spell of decapitation.

Alcain tripped over his trousers.

The spell sliced the head off the axe, which continued its forward flight and buried itself in the Demon's heart.

Alcain stood up again, instinctively swinging the axe handle. After several minutes he realised the axe was headless. 'I'm doomed!' he thought, and tripped over the last Demon lying dead at his feet.

'Ha! That showed him! Now I must get back to the High Priestess.'

It was a mere ten days later that he began his return journey, having carefully ransacked the castle for gold, jewels, precious substances, and a belt for his trousers. At the barbed wire fence he emphasized the fact of his safe and successful return by knocking the gnome off his mushroom again. If knocking him off the first time hadn't done him any good, it certainly hadn't done him any harm — and it just as certainly made him *feel* good.

At last he arrived at the temple of the High Priestess, and recounted his adventures, adding the usual embellishments of a ten-fold inflation of the enemy forces and the evident opposition of blind fate also. The Priestess began to look a little puzzled, and then interrupted, 'You said you *felt* the moisture of the potion?'

'Yes.'

'But I told you, that potion works on everything.'

'Everything? But I thought I was immune. I mean...'

The old woman shook her head. 'I'm not that clever, Alcain. Alcain? Alcain!'

But Alcain was by now far off into the sunset, muttering to himself.

'Brown windsor soup. Must find some brown windsor soup. I must. I've just got to...'

Kevin Smith

Kevin Smith has been writing SF and fantasy for about fifteen years. His first published story was 'A Night on the Tiles' in ***Ad Astra*** *in 1980; this is his second. In the mid-70s he stumbled across the awesomely subtle game of Finchley Central while waiting for an underground train at Kings Cross, and told it to the world.*

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Eagerly awaited here is FGU's latest offering – 'Flashing Blades.' A historical RPG set in 17th century France. A must for musketeers. FGU have also threatened to release 12 new V&V adventures in 1985. A re-released Swordbearer is in the pipeline along with another RPG – 'Mad Dogs And Englishmen.' A must for mad dogs.

AVALON HILL have released two modules for Dune containing the usual 'spice'; Monster Coliseum for the ever-expanding Runequest 3 system; Perilous Lands and Book of Tables for Powers & Perils. All good solid stuff for expanding existing games.

Victory Games' latest additions to the James Bond RPG range are 'Thrilling Locations' and 'The Man With The Golden Gun'. TL is designed to expand the campaign world; 160pp. Golden Gun details the exploits of Fransisco Scaramanga – the world's most expensive assasin. Watch out for JB 'action episodes' – there are four board games available (8 years and up) – £8.95.

Latest Releases from Grenadier include: Fantasylords 7 (Dungeon Raiders), Fantasylords 8 (Fantasy Knights), Dragonlords 16 (Magic Users), Dragonlords 18 (Female Adventurers) and Dragonlords Dragons 7, 8 & 9 which are Blue, Copper and Bronze. See full lists opposite for details.

Standard Games have taken the plunge and moved into a full role-playing game, it is selling fast and looks to be **DRAGONROAR** one of the most sought-after games in 1985. Complete with cassette containing complete instructions, background and spine-tingling solo adventure. Excellent value at £12.95.

The range of best-selling de luxe dice has received double the colours originally available and a set of six retails for a miserly 95p. Their range has recently been joined by DE LUXE GEM INKED DICE. Six colours are available in each type of die which sell for 25p each or £1.45 for the set.

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ENDLESS GAMES have made massive improvements to their range. All of the excellent Endless Plans now come in sturdy boxes – still at £3.99. **Halls of the Dwarven Kings** combines a top class original Tortured Souls scenario with a Dm's screen, scrolls, maps & NPC stats on floorplans. Great value at £7.95. STOP PRESS – now available the sequel to 'Halls' – The Lost Shrine of Kasar-Khan (£4.95)

The TUNNELS & TROLLS game system has received a boost by the release of the COLOUR range. This includes the rulebook @ £5.95 and the boxed set @ £8.95. Also available – Sea Of Mystery, Beyond The Silvered Pane, Gamesmen Of Kasar, Naked Doom, Deathtrap Equaliser & Captif D'Yvoire. All A4 size at £1.95.

New items from TSR cover just about every aspect of the D&D range. O2 & X8 for Expert, a revised DM's screen, Dragonlance 4 and two new competition modules for AD & D – C3 & C4. Basic is well served with a new module – B8 – and The Book of Marvelous Magic (AC4). This is a very useful add-on containing 500 new magical items not contained in the 3 boxed sets.

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AD&D®: All That Glitters

After a brave but not particularly successful attempt at a slightly different module with UK5, the folk at t'Mill step back into the fold with a more conventional follow-the-treasure-map adventure: **UK6 All That Glitters**.

Written by Jim Bambra rather than Graeme Morris, UK6 has a slightly different feel to it. Although the basic idea is hackneyed, it is well executed. The fragments of map lead the players into unknown jungle territory infested with fierce tribesmen and thence to passage through the 'impassable' Hadarna Mountains. This section of the module is extremely well thought out and very much has the feel of exploring ancient ruins rather than a random collection of rooms filled with monsters and labelled 'old'. I won't say what lies on the other side of the mountains except to mention that there are more tribesmen, this time with a nicely worked out ecology as well as the usual list of statistics.

The party should consist of 5-8 characters of 5th to 7th level as stated on the attached sticker, not 3rd to 5th as printed on the cover; a Lake Geneva error, I'm assured. It is important to note that the party must contain at least one Druid or Cleric, though this shouldn't be a problem for a normal balanced party. Another important point to consider is that if the party all have some means of flying, they could bypass the mountains and miss out an extremely interesting part of the adventure. A resourceful DM should soon put a stop to that though!

If the module is to be used as part of a campaign you'll need an unexplored jungle area 'on the edge of civilisation' to incorporate it. If you do, UK6 should make a worthwhile and interesting excursion for your players having as it does a good balance between thinking and hacking.

Chris Hunter

CHIVALRY & SORCERY: The

The Princess Rowena has been kidnapped by the Evil Dragon Tersonius Vintrix. A gallant band of Knights and Adventurers is needed to rescue her from the worm's foul clutches, for which deed the Princess's Uncle and Guardian will bestow whatever boon it is in his power to give.

It is hard to believe that this is the first scenario for **Chivalry & Sorcery**, despite the fact that the game has been around since 1977. Presumably FGU believed that gamers who were incapable of mastering the intricacies of C&S would also be able to write their own scenarios. Certainly the way in which **The Dragon Lord** is planned would back this up, as it is presented more as a plotline with background than as a rigid series of encounters. The 20-page booklet is clearly laid out, and comes with a pull-out colour map of the wilderness in which the adventure takes place. The colour map is a nice idea, clearly distinguishing the terrain types, though unfortunately it has a rather messy appearance.

The scenario is firmly rooted in the ethos of Chivalry that pervades C&S, and provides the bare bones of a campaign set in a world with the flavour of the Middle Ages. One of the disadvantages of the scenario arises out of this — it just

MERP: Rangers of the North

This is the latest of Iron Crown's Middle Earth campaign modules, dealing with the Kingdom of Arthedain in north-west Middle Earth, where the Dunedain dwell.

The module follows the standard format of the series, with a concentration of information in the sections on inhabitants, politics and power. There is an excellent section on prominent personalities, which includes Gandalf and Aragorn, Frodo and Bilbo, and others.

The eight centre pages are printed full-colour on parchment — it's easy to remove these from the rest of the book to allow reference. Four of them, placed side by side, show the area covered by the campaign, from Hobbiton in the south to Ered Luin in the west. The reverse of each map sheet is printed with town plans — using different colours to distinguish between the various functions of the buildings. These maps can be confusing at times, because there is such a wide range of colours and shadings; it is difficult to tell a miller's from a stable, for example.

It's always the little touches of detail which turn a mediocre product into something which justifies expenditure of £10. Some of these minor details will never be used, of course, while others will play an important part in the campaign. And many referees seem to seize on a point of interest — perhaps the Military organisation of Arthedain, or the story of Numenor — and make from that an intriguing series of adventures. This module is not as rich in this respect as some of the Middle Earth products, but it is still a major strongpoint of the module.

Most of the adventures built into **Rangers of the North** are set in the Third Age — around 1640. This is before the events of Lord of the Rings, though there is enough information for campaigns (albeit on a smaller scale) to be run at any time in the Third or Fourth Ages. Fourth Age adventure is very appealing, in the turmoil that follows the war.

All in all, then, a worthwhile addition to the Middle Earth range.

Andy Blakeman

LOREMASTER: The Iron Wind

This (second edition) module is part of Iron Crown Enterprises' **Loremaster** series — a large campaign which is comparable in size with the same company's Middle Earth campaign. The campaign is set in the world of Vog Mur, and this book details an island system called the Mur Fostisyr. The historical background is predictably dominated by the struggle between Good and Evil... yawn. I, for one, am sick and tired of 'the ongoing fight against the Unlife and its twisted servants'. How do we know they are twisted? From what norm are they twisted? Perhaps it is not the servants of the unlife that are twisted, but its opponents; and if it were, how would we know? All this good-and-evil stuff is very implausible.

In fairness to **The Iron Wind**, however, it is well presented and the background is given in the form of a story, told by a certain Elor Once Dark. This method of supplying information is laudable, and while this example lacks refinement, it is far superior to ICE's standard system. And each of the adventures is well-structured and appears to be well balanced — insofar as there are no fatal encounters.

Apart from the background, then, this is a worthwhile campaign pack — suitable for any rules system, I might add, and free-standing of other Loremaster products.

Andy Blakeman

Product information

UK6 - All That Glitters is a TSR module for the AD&D game, available from TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, price £4.95

The Dragon Lord is a scenario for the **Chivalry & Sorcery** game produced by FGU, distributed in Britain by Games of Liverpool, 89 Victoria Street, Liverpool L1. Price £4.45

The Iron Wind is a module for the **Loremaster** campaign, price £7.95; **Rangers of the North**, a module for the **Middle Earth Role-Playing** game, price £9.95. Both are ICE products, available from Games Workshop, 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10, or Unwin paperbacks (try your local bookshop).

Thieves' Kitchen is a set of dungeon accessories from Limited Edition Castings, 'Shot Tower Studio', 38 Mill Farm Crescent, Houslow TW4 5PG. The set costs £6.50

Dragon Lord

wouldn't work if run in a standard sword-and-sorcery environment. Another is that it requires ability on the part of the Game Master — this is *not* a scenario for the beginner to rolegames.

Nevertheless, there is sufficient depth to the adventure to give several sessions of play, and the plot is by no means as simple and clichéd as the brief outline I gave earlier might imply. Further, since the adventure is in the form of a plotline, it means that if your campaign is close to the spirit of the Middle Ages, this scenario could be converted to most game systems with ease.

Paul Mason

THIEVES' KITCHEN

Limited Edition Castings provide an interesting selection of dungeon accessories in 25mm. We sampled their **Thieves' Kitchen** set, in effect a white metal mini-diorama, consisting of a section of double-faced wall, with floor base, and a cooking range which is hinged to swing outwards to reveal a hidden door in the wall. Optional extras include tables and chairs, kitchen fare such as food, goblets and cutlery for colour, and chests with opening lids.

It's an original and ingenious idea, though it should be said that the problem with such metal items is cost, and you need to think carefully how often such a setting will fit into your scenarios before paying the £6.50 that the set sells for.

The standard of sculpting and casting is well up to what's otherwise available on the market, however, and the firm offers a number of other interesting set-pieces; a graveyard set, for example, and a Shinto shrine set, and also a large number of single accessories at the usual prices, including numerous animals, and various corpses — a pile of 'stricken skeletons in a heap' for an encounter which went well, and dead adventurers for one which didn't! If you are looking for instant settings, check out their list.

Ian Knight

TWILIGHT 2000

Twilight 2000 is GDW's game of World War III. So far, the war has lasted five years, there have been nuclear exchanges but not an all-out holocaust, and the ground fighting is in Central Europe. The players are members of the US 5th Division (or attached allied units) which has just been decimated. They must face local warlords, roving bands of deserters, organised Polish and Soviet units, occasional radiation hazards, lack of ammunition, fuel, food...

For £25, there doesn't seem to be much in the game box: two thin books, three booklets, and several loose sheets, but appearances are deceptive — there's a lot here. The brightest item is also the worst: a colour map of Poland which is too small. A bigger map in black and white would be more worthwhile.

Character set-up is complex, but this makes the game run more smoothly once they are rolled up. There is an interesting new twist: the higher the character's attributes, the less military experience (skills) he has. This, GDW admit, is purely a game-balance device, but it works well. The game mechanics are simple and easy to run once you've found all the tables, and includes a nice idea for deciding NPC motivations by cutting cards.

This game system has its downfall built into its basic premise. A group of soldiers behind enemy lines in a disintegrating society is far more difficult to referee than any other game because of the fast-moving nature of the group. Radom is a big crater: will they go north to Bialobrzegi or south to Szydlowiec? Will they attack the supply dump or not? And so on. The players have endless choices in each evening's play, and the referee must be ready to cope with any decision they make. This is against the current trend in rpgs, especially in the States where parties tend to be steered for the referee's own ease. And if a game fails in the States it'll have no back-up even if it succeeds here (like **Bushido**).

Other bad points: the game suffers from initialitis, with a plethora of phrases like *DIF:WVD*; and guns used by the British (I imagine most readers will play British characters) are not listed by the names the British use. For example, the Army's current rifle is an FLN, but everyone who uses it calls it an SLR. Both these are niggling points — you can correct the second and get used to the first. More serious is a major error on the gun tables. Being American, GDW assume that everyone in combat uses their weapons in burst, so they list how many 'shots' (= bursts) you can get out of the magazine. In fact, many weapons can't fire bursts (including the SLR) so one bullet equals one shot, which gives about three times as many shots per magazine. To correct this, the referee must do a little research (preferably in *Jane's Infantry Weapons* at a local library) unless GDW admit they're wrong and expand the errata sheet.

Overall, this is a good game, well worth clubbing together for if you belong to a group of experienced players who like free-running games and whose referee can run a scenario from minimal notes. If your referee has no experience of 'winging it' and needs all the details worked out in advance, this is not the game for you. Unfortunately, there are far too many of these around, so the game will probably sink into oblivion within a year.

Chris Felton

WORLDS OF BORIS VALLEJO

As tie-ins go, **Worlds of Boris Vallejo** is somewhat unusual. Vallejo's work suggests no obvious design strategy for a boardgame — other than using his paintings to illustrate it. Effectively this is all Mayfair Games have done. They have dressed up a poor strategy game in some well-known fantasy artwork.

The game comes in a sturdy box sporting a Vallejo painting on the cover. Inside are thirty 3x4" tiles (the worlds, each with another full-colour Vallejo picture on it, a pack of World cards, a pack of Character/Artifact cards, a set of third-rate plastic counters and a rules sheet. The tiles and cards come in die-cut sheets, but the die-cutting is high standard and they separate cleanly. The game is for two to six players, and Mayfair have thrown in a solo version for good measure. The object is to control eight worlds by conquest.

The first part of the game consists in laying out the world tiles to form the board. Players position five tiles each, according to their whim. A refreshing touch, this, since it means the board will be substantially different every game.

The second part is about the capture of enemy worlds. When players move a pawn onto an enemy's world, they must try to conquer it. This involves beating the defences concealed on that world. The attacker and defender may ask for allies, who collect a consolation if their side wins (as in **Cosmic Encounter**). And if the conquest succeeds, the victor may have a second try (again, like Cosmic Encounter). The process of acquiring allies introduces some diplomacy, which is definitely a plus.

Throughout the game much depends on matching up numbers on the world tiles with those on Character cards. Since the numbers on the tiles are printed white on grey, they are barely visible, so this soon becomes tiresome. Any decent group of players will quite likely find the game runs into a protracted stalemate once one or more players reaches seven worlds. Since it is remarkably easy to prevent someone from taking the magic eighth world needed to win, the recommended half-hour playing time is incredibly optimistic.

Moreover, as an optimum strategy is discoverable in a handful of games, Worlds needs something extra to justify its price tag. Alas, it does not have it. Vallejo's paintings are immaculately reproduced on the world tiles, but I venture more pleasure could be had from them if they were mounted on the wall, or used as coffee mats or something, rather than in playing the game.

Matt Williams

Product Information

Worlds of Boris Vallejo (£23.95) from Mayfair Games, and **Twilight 2000** (£24.95) from Games Designers Workshop, are distributed by Games Workshop, 27–29 Sunbeam Rd, London NW10.

Addresses are given for information only; most products should be available at your local games shop.

ILLUMINATIONS

Remember my name....

Some people are born to fame; some have it thrust rudely upon them and yet others storm the Halls of Fame, kick open its portals and force their way in, using their sharp little elbows to consolidate their position. I have seen John Maitland's elbows, they are honed to stiletto points. In his FameQuest he is not averse to ringing up honest columnists and asking them to tell the world that he has left Standard Games and is available for employment. He even goes so far as to dictate the copy as he would like to see it appear! Needless to say, your columnist resisted such attempts to use Uncle Don's sacred organ as a personal Job Centre. However, the little fellow has now settled into fresh employment and his new berth is worthy of our attention. He is Sales Manager at Avalon Hill UK. It looks as though this organisation is making a push to be an all-rounder in the British games business rather than merely importing Avalon Hill games. They have changed their name to TM Games (someone had to do it!) and they have also taken over Endless Plans. This leaves Endless Plans' ex-proprietor, Alan Hickling, free to use his creative talents to better effect.

It will be interesting to see how John Maitland's brand of live-wire management works at TM. Certainly if they want to get noticed, the chirpy chappy from Hemel Hempstead is the lad to do. Watch out for interesting developments emanating from High Road, North Finchley.

Whilst on the subject of reorganisation, Games Workshop have created four new Directors, including the diminutive Peter Darvill-Evans, the well groomed Ian Bailey (just about the only person working at Games Workshop who is not permanently sewn inside a company T-shirt) and the homely Brian Ansell. This will leave the original two co-Directors, Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson, with more time to concentrate on their creative work as authors.

More Illuminations on Page 54 - including TSR new releases

The Citadel of ICE

Citadel Miniatures, which is of course virtually the private bailiwick of Brian Ansell, have released a Journal. This is intended to be an update of their catalogue and further issues will appear throughout the year. As well as containing details of Citadel's latest releases, it has interesting articles on painting and other aspects of figure modelling. There are also signs that Citadel's copywriters are improving with age and experience. The humour, whilst still derivative (they appear to be devotees of the "zany" school), is much more polished than that which we had to put up with in the early **Warhammer** for example. Spelling is still a weak point, however.

Amongst Citadel's most popular lines at the moment, according to many retailers, is their **Middle Earth** series. They are now to be launched in the US following their successful entry into the home market. It will be interesting to see how they fare in the States against the local team's products. By these, I mean Grenadier's **Middle Earth** range. Interesting also to see how Grenadier's range does over here, where it is now available from Grenadier UK Ltd. Grenadier's next Middle Earth releases have been announced. Once again they are to be boxed sets. They will be **Shelob's Lair** and **Hill Men of the Troll Shaws**. Astute readers will note that these are the same titles as two of Iron Crown Enterprises' Middle Earth supplements. The connection does not end there. The figure sets will utilise the same artwork as appears on the respective booklets.

Talking of which, ICE's latest campaign module is **Rangers of the North**. It describes the Northern Kingdom of the Dunedain in great detail. The main bulk of the volume is set about the year TA 1640 - the Witch King of Angmar is very much in evidence and the Shire has been recently settled by the civilised and comfortable hobbits. Information is also given about other ages such as the time of Bilbo and Frodo. Complete MERP stats are given for Aragorn and Gandalf and 'many important hobbits'. Several adventure scenarios are provided, as are suitable layouts and floor plans. As ever, this product is of the highest standard. ICE have demonstrated that the decision to license them to produce the Official game material for Tolkien's World was correct. They were virtually unknown as a company when the licence was granted to them, but the decision, surprising at the time, has been amply vindicated. ICE's products are currently available in the UK from Games Workshop.

Advance to Mayfair

Mayfair Games have been with us for a while, but their products are not particularly well known in Britain. They recently extended their representation here by appointing another distributor, Games of Liverpool, so perhaps we can expect to see more of their products in the shops. I have a stack of goods to look at, so let's make a start now and examine the balance next month.

Mayfair have a range of supplements called **Role Aids**™, consisting of adventures and source books. The adventures I have are all designed with the **AD&D** game in mind and are described as 'suitable' for Advanced. They also carry a notice to the effect that their use of the trade mark is not sanctioned by TSR. However, let us leave such matters to one side and concentrate on what is on offer.

The Keep is an adventure based on the Paramount movie of the same name. Characters are confronted by an evil foe which they must face in three different ages, from the Age of Magic to the Second World War. **The Keep** is for 3-6 characters of levels 9-12. In **Angry Wizard** the time-travelling magic user (he maintains an apartment in our era in Illinois of all places) sends the characters off to find a gem big enough to encase a dragon's head, whilst in **Deadly Power** they must seek a Box of Seeds. **Angry Wizard** is for 3-6 characters of levels 1-4, whilst **Deadly Power** is for 4-8 characters. levels 6-9. **Shipwrecker** sees the players pitted against a desperate band of pirates, not to mention an equally desperate tribe of goblins. **Shipwrecker** is for 3-6 characters of levels 4-7. **Swordthrust** is for 3-6 characters of levels 3-7 and wins my instant devotion by virtue of its opening line in Player Character Introduction — 'It is a dark and stormy night....' O, deathless prose, where would scenario writers be without you?

Dark Folk is more of a soft cover book than the slim volume we associate with most supplements. It gives detailed background on Trolls, Orcs, Goblins, Kobolds and Gnolls and provides a suitable scenario featuring each one of these charming races. It also contains an essay by Robert L Aspirin (of Thieves World fame) on the nature of Orcish culture, which is most illuminating. It appears that Orcs are very bad indeed — sort of like traffic wardens but with more charisma.

No prices yet for any of this stuff, but doubtless Games of Liverpool will be overjoyed to furnish you with lists.

Next month we will take a look at some more Mayfair supplements as well as one or two of their boardgames.

Dispel Confusion

Role-playing games have rules which are open to interpretation, and this sometimes causes problems when two gamers interpret things differently. ***Dispel Confusion*** *is a column intended to help by providing answers to rules questions.*

At present we mainly answer questions about TSR games; while the answers we give are not fully official we do have contact with the designers and a good deal of playing and refereeing experience (among our other dubious abilities).

An answer column needs questions, so send yours to: Dispel Confusion, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. If you don't want to wait for your question to appear in the magazine, please enclose a 9"x 4" SSAE.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games

Q. What are the exact limits of a **wish**? *(Advanced)*

A. The two spells most open to abuse by player characters are **wish** and **limited wish**. The very nature of the phrase 'I wish that....' invites players to bend and break the rules of the game, and DMs often appear to have little choice but to give in. The first and simplest method of limiting player characters in using wishes is not to let them get hold of either **rings of wishes** or details of the spells in the first place.

The physical effects of casting a wish or limited wish are clear enough: the caster ages 3 years or 1 year, depending upon which spell is being cast. Using a wish from a ring does not age the character, but the MU who first put the wish into the ring is aged.

Limited wishes should be seen as having minor, localised effects upon reality. The PHB gives examples of restoring 'some hit points' or increasing the 'duration of some magical effects'. As a rough guideline it is fair to assume that a limited wish used as an adjunct to some process will produce the best possible result that could have been statistically expected. When used to 'restore some hit points', for example, the limited wish would have the equivalent effect of the best result of the most powerful **cure** spell, without any of its random factors (otherwise, it is simpler to cast a cure spell in the first place).

As for other possible effects, the limited wish spell should be controlled by the DM. A character who wishes that her opponents will miss when attacking in combat could have this limited wish fulfilled by having opponents always miss her and hit her companions, or by the DM applying a -1 or -2 adjustment to the opponents' 'to hit' rolls. Naturally, the limited wish to this effect should come to an end at the finish of the melee.

Wishes are much more powerful, and hence much more abused. The only limit set upon them is that they cannot be used to cancel the decrees of god-like beings. We think it is fairly safe to assume that god-like beings decree themselves to be alive, so player characters who attempt 'deicide' by wishing a god dead are wasting their breath.

The main limit on the wishes of all types must be the ability of the DM to deliberately 'misinterpret' what the characters are wishing for by being perversely literal. If character wishes that someone were no longer dead the DM should feel quite at liberty to have the deceased return as, say, a

GAME COMPANY

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Clubs

Send details of your club/club requirements to IMAGINE magazine, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, Cambridge CB1 4AD, for a free mention in this column

First this month must be a club advertised in issue 23, in **Fenham, Newcastle:** this club has been disbanded since we first mentioned it, so someone else will have to organise a club in this area. Apologies to G S Ketchin for the inconvenience caused.

Next, Jacob Andersson of Sweden wrote to tell us that the magazine is read 'over here'. Pleased to hear it, Jacob! His club, Spelnästet, has 30 members who play all kinds of rpgs, boardgames and tabletop wargames, and some also play **Crasimoff's World**. Anyone interested contact Jacob at: Kråkbärsgatan 14, 234 00 Lomma, Sweden. Tel 040 - 412022

Now for the more regular mentions:

BASILDON, Essex: SEWARS games club meets every Tuesday 7.30 - 10.30pm at Malyons Meeting Hall, Malyons, Basildon. Contact Chris, 0268 26969

BECKENHAM, Kent: Player/DMs (16+) needed for small weekly **AD&D** group which meets 2-7pm Sundays. Reliability essential. Other frp games considered. Russ, 650 4713

BOLTON, Lancs: Glen Campbell plays **AD&D**! He wants to meet other 14-year-old gamers in his area. Write to Glen at 12 Willand Close, Moss House Farm, BL2 6TQ

HANWELL, London: The Dark Riders Frpg club meets every Friday night, 7-10pm, at the Community Centre, to play a (bloody) **AD&D** campaign, **CoC, Warhammer** and anything else with enough interested players. First night free: ring David on 578 8122, or just drop in. Everyone (12+) welcome

LEEDS: Club or players sought in Rothwell, South Leeds area by gamer who plays mainly **AD&D**, also **D&D, MERP, RuneQuest** and **Stormbringer**, and is willing to try anything at all. Robert Spavin, 94 North Lane, Woodlesford, LS26 8RW. Tel 822398

LONDON: Sigma Games Club meets every 2nd/4th/5th Sunday in every month, 3pm to midnight, admission £1.50 including coffee. IVC, 3 The Piazza, Covent Garden

NORTH LONDON: New **AD&D** campaign seeks friendly, non-sexist adult players of any experience, willing to use brains as well as brawn in unpublished adventures. Phone: 809-1406

SHREWSBURY, Salop: Adult beginner seeks other adult players or club. **AD&D**, willing to learn other games. Sue Jones, 55 Canon St, Shrewsbury SY2 5HH. Tel 68130 (evenings)

YORK: Urgently needed: **Aftermath, RQ** players. Please contact Russell Jackson, Tower House, Landing Lane, Riccall, York. Quickly!!

Events

First, more apologies, this time from **Leics Poly Games Society** who cancelled their con, mentioned #25, because it was so close to Bradford's. We were right about **MANORCON** that issue though — this **Diplomacy** con really will take place in July: 19th - 21st, at Birmingham University. Accommodation available, as at most conventions. Further details from Bill Wright, 43 Faroe Rd, London W14. The same weekend sees **ALBACON** at Central Hotel, Glasgow, with confirmed guests Anne McCaffrey and Harlan Ellison. Write to 20 Hillingdon Gdns, Cardonald, Glasgow.

Backtracking a moment, **READING'S RPG DAY 2** is on 22 June at Ryeish Green School. No details available but write to Mr M Holland, 17 Brybur Close, Whitley Wood, Reading.

Then there's **CAMCON**, 13-15 September, at New Hall College, Cambridge. Neil Taylor, Perspective Design, 9 Pembroke St, Cambridge CB2 3QY should know more. **GAMES DAY** will be at the Royal Horticultural Hall, London, as usual: 28-29 September. Details in future issues.

October 11-13th sees **MIDCON** — the Star Trek version — at Leicester International Hotel, cheaper if you book before 30 June: Terry Elson, 8 Ennerdale Cl, Oadby, Leicester.

November 1-3 looks like being a busy weekend. **NOVACON** will be at the De Vere Hotel, Coventry, with guests Dave Langford and James White. Details from 86 Bearwood Farm Road, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72 1AG. **CYMRUCON** will be at Centre Hotel, Cardiff; that's all we know!

vampire (which is definitely not dead), thirsting for the blood of the wisher, or as a zombie, (and the social problems of a zombie for a friend could be somewhat interesting, not to mention having to put up with the understandable resentment of the poor zombie).

The DM must be prepared to use any and all loopholes that the players leave, ruthlessly; refuse to grant wishes with cautious sub-clauses and qualifiers; and generally make the whole business of saying 'I wish....' risky. Wishes should become something saved for a last when-all-else-has-failed resort, not something used as a casual spell when players cannot think of anything more original. Of course, if a player character is unknowingly wearing a ring of wishes and happens to start a sentence with 'I wish that....' then the DM is entitled to a little joke....

Q. If a magic bow is used to shoot a normal arrow, can the arrow hit a creature which is only vulnerable to magic weapons? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. The short answer is no, it cannot. Although a bow and arrow can be regarded as a single weapon, only the bow is actually magical in this case. The bow can fire the arrow straighter ('+1 to hit') and harder ('+1 damage'), but it does not actually make it magical in any way. By the same logic, a magical arrow fired from an ordinary bow *can* hit such a monster.

Of course, you could always thump the beastie over the head with the bow!

Q. Is it possible for a player character to become a sage? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. Not really. In the AD&D game, sages are a formalised sub-variety of that useful creature, the Little Old Man (or Little Old Lady), which gives DMs the opportunity to pass on information to the player characters without speaking as the DM. In other words, sages can give out information about the game world which varies from the entirely true (eg 'This sword you have shown me is OrcNibbler, a **longsword +1**, rumoured to slay orcs with a single blow and to have the power of flight') to the completely spurious ('Beware of skeletons with blue noses'). They can also be the objects of interesting quests, as the player characters may need to track down a really esoteric specialist at times.

There is nothing to stop player characters setting themselves up as sages, but as they do not (indeed, should not) have access to the DM's campaign notes or any rule books, how can they give out anything more than the sketchiest information? Sages spend most of their time researching in dusty libraries and thinking — hardly the stuff of exciting adventures....

Q Can a cleric use a flaming sword, where the burning causes damage? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A No. If playing by the strict letter of the rules, clerics cannot use edged weapons, no matter what the other effects of the weapon; just because it is flaming, the edge is not blunted. It is also worth mentioning that the Pelinore material has differentiated between religions by allowing some clerics to carry swords and other weapons out of the ordinary.

Jim Bambra, Mike Brunton, Phil Gallagher & Graeme Morris

DUNGEON
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SNORE SPLUTTER SNORE
SOON, I HOPE
WH-WHAT HAPPENED?
WH-WHERE AM I?
A MESSAGE!
WHEEE!
IT'S FOR YOU-OO!
THUD
YOU ARE IN THE FOREST OF DREAMS. I HAVE SAVED YOU FROM YOUR SORCEROUS FOEMAN, TENDED TO YOUR WOUNDS AND FURNISHED YOU WITH ARMS. DO NOT SEEK TO THANK ME, FOR I AM LONG SINCE GONE UPON MY GOOD AND HOLY QUEST.
WHEEE!
THWACK!
P.S. TRY SOME OF THE MUSHROOMS — THEY'RE REALLY TASTY.

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Fantasy Media

Colin Greenland, author of ***Daybreak on a Different Mountain*** *and co-editor of SF magazine* ***Interzone****, reviews the latest additions to the fantasy/SF media.*

Jeff Bridges is a harmless alien and Karen Allen the confused, yet caring earthling who becomes his only hope for survival in ***Starman****. Picture courtesy Columbia Pictures.*

Picking up greetings in 54 languages from our *Voyager II* spacecraft, an alien comes to say hello to Planet Earth, and is promptly shot down by the Americans. In three days a rescue ship will land. Until then he needs transport, protection and camouflage. Woken by a bump in the night, Jenny Hayden gets up to find him lying on her carpet, rapidly metamorphosing into an exact replica of her late husband.

STARMAN (Columbia, PG) starts well, with engaging performances from Karen Allen as the woman trying not to go crazy and Jeff Bridges as the man in the borrowed body. But then director John Carpenter changes his mind, and turns it into an irritatingly soft headed love story. What a waste of a promising idea.

He was an all-American World War II superhero, but McCarthy's anti-Communist inquisition destroyed his career. Now, derelict and forgotten, he lies drunk in an alley. But the evil Mr Midnight (Christopher Lee) has stolen the Hypno-Ray, and a nation cries out for **THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN INVINCIBLE**! Vince (Alan Arkin) is unmoved. Where were they when *he* needed a hand? Besides, he's forgotten how to fly. Featuring hilarious musical routines from the men who wrote **The Rocky Horror Show** and tongue-in-cheek aerobatics by the effects team from **Superman**, this eccentric, extraordinary and utterly delightful Australian movie has been unforgiveably denied to British audiences until now. All credit to Entertainment in Video for discovering it.

It is 1988. The most wanted man in the world sits in a bedroom in Hastings. At his fingertip, a device to detonate all nuclear bombs everywhere simultaneously. His ultimatum: immediate global disarmament, or global devastation. Originally published in 1976 as **Ground Zero Man**, Bob Shaw's **THE PEACE MACHINE** (Gollancz, £7.95) includes revisions for a more nuclear-conscious audience, but it's still largely quite a traditional thriller, as compulsive and characterful as anything by Shaw. Two other celebrated reissues: **VERMILION SANDS** (Dent, £2.95), J G Ballard's hypnotic chronicle of life, death and dreams in a glamorous, bizarre resort of the future, and Joanna Russ's **THE FEMALE MAN** (Women's Press, £1.95), no less wild and wonderful than it first was ten years ago. Her new book, **EXTRA(ORDINARY) PEOPLE** (Women's Press, £1.95), is a sequence of portraits of telepathic visitors at large in human history — intriguing reading, with subtleties that linger in the mind.

The Women's Press SF comes in beautiful covers. It's a shame the same's not true of Geoff Ryman's **THE WARRIOR WHO CARRIED LIFE** (Unwin, £2.95), which Unwin have managed to make look like something by Enid Blyton. A bit of Hieronymus Bosch would have been more appropriate. Ryman draws on folklore other authors have forgotten, to create a dark fantasy at once familiar and deeply strange. Cara's quest through hell for vengeance on inhuman invaders has the clarity and conviction of a good nightmare. Geoff Ryman is the most gifted of new British fantasy writers by far.

Damiano Delstrego also goes to hell on a quest, seeking not vengeance on the invaders of his hometown Partestrada, but an end to strife altogether, and a guarantee of peace in troubled fifteenth-century Piedmont. For Damiano is much troubled by the sorcerous skills he has inherited from his ambitious father. He'd rather be playing the lute with his tutor and friend, the Archangel Raphael. **DAMIANO** (Bantam, £1.95) is a mild, reflective kind of fantasy, disrupted by the incidents of extreme violence the reluctant wizard has to cause and confront. R A MacAvoy's lucid, attractive writing has won her much popularity in America. It would be good to see her do well here too.

There are some things in science fiction that humankind was never meant to discover — the terrible blurbs, the creaking dialogue, the deathless prose. Undaunted, two men went ahead and discovered them anyway. Were they inspired or just — insane? Find out for yourself in Neil Gaiman and Kim Newman's **GHASTLY BEYOND BELIEF** (Arrow, £2.50), a compendium of the weird, the unspeakable, and the crashingly inept, plundered from the forty-two corners of SF and fantasy fiction and film. ('A neutron instigator! It might just work!') For the next two months, Neil Gaiman will be writing this column. *You have been warned.*

Colin Greenland

Letters

*Just when I thought we had this whole two page spread to ourselves (and **VOP**, I suppose), suddenly our advertising people have sold extra space, and we've got to put up with the information about **Next Issue**. And here you are only just starting the best bit of this one. Still, there is plenty of room for you to air your views on any subject which you feel would be of interest to your fellow gamers. Just write to:*

IMAGINE magazine (letters), The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD

and we'll try and fit you in.

So popular is this part of the magazine that one of my colleagues is trying to muscle in. Mike Brunton, for all kinds of reasons, has been the subject of a number of letters this month.

Darren Parks, St Ives: I think **Pelinore** is excellent, but I've had a bit of difficulty fitting the Eastern special into my campaign world. Still, the scenario **Words of Keep-You-On-The-Go-Joe** was well constructed and very well written. I now believe your magazine is second only to **Dagon** as the best gaming magazine on the market.

M A Troy, Warrington, Cheshire: Let me congratulate you on April's edition; highly informative and interesting. I especially liked **The Words of Go-Guji**. I would like to quibble about one detail though. Whoever drew the plan of Kumo Castle has made one slight but significant error. The main gate of the castle is in a north-easterly direction, and this point on the compass is considered to be extremely unlucky, since it is the direction by which demons enter and leave. It even has a special name, *Kimon*, and there are *no* exits or entrances on either subways or JNR stations with that name anywhere in Japan. Of course, it could be argued that the gate being there is symbolic of Kumo Ushii's demonic life, but he wasn't like that before he met Go-Guji.

Gareth Turner, Kingston, Surrey: I've just read Mike Brunton's report on Limited Editions work. I'll pulverise him with a **portent** potion. I am a devoted fan of this little firm — there isn't another company around who will put themselves out to make the unusual for gamers who like to spring surprises during an intense session of gaming.

Limited Edition Castings, Hounslow, Middx: Who is this Mike Brunton? Does he think his comments are more worthy than those of Joe Dever and Gary Chalk of **Lone Wolf** fame? Our retailers are disgusted, and are ignoring him; some shows are similarly scathed, yet go on to win huge accolades. We shall do the same.

People want our accessories. I assume MB hadn't been informed that all our work is hand cast. A bit of healthy criticism never does anyone any harm, but his words are as vitriolic, almost as if he is conducting a personal vendetta.

There were a few more supporters for LEC, clearly grateful for the variety offered by this enterprising team. Still, Mike sticks by what he said – he has no axe to grind, but he has different standards and tries to use his experience to guess what the average reader would think. Maybe he's wrong, but he is honest. He is also a twit – fancy not knowing about Japanese demons never riding the tube trains.... We can only offer the theory that the gate was built after the meeting with Go-guji. Onto #24, and a piece of information.

Andrew Shenton, Stalybridge, Cheshire: In #24 you said you didn't know where the new ideas for the **INDIANA JONES™** game come from; they come from the **IJ** comic. **The Golden Goddess** was in #10, in it he battles against Ilsa Toht (sister of the baddy in **Raiders**). In #11, he steals a calender ring from some aborigines — they chase him and he is saved by some ninja-like warriors.

How about a review of the new **DC Heroes** game from Mayfair, as I would like to know which game is best.

Chris Hunt, Stockport, Cheshire: Belated congratulations on #24. All the articles were well-written, especially the pickpockets' encounter tables and the lockpicking article. **How To Sell The Ponti Bridge** was one of the best short stories you have ever published.

Martin Peter Keel, Hungerford, Berks: I thought #24 was mega-super-brill.

David Pearson, Stoke Golding, Warks: I am writing to comment on **All That Glistens** in #24. In a game that leans to hack'n'slay, this article worked towards more interesting city encounters. However, Chris' idea of conning the players as well as the characters is ludicrous. I finally chose to use Chris' ideas in an attempt to add spice to an adventure and to relieve the players of a few gold pieces. The best confidence tricks to run are those with high-level NPCs. A good example was the adventure **Jack of All Trades** that appeared in #6 and the **Special Edition**. Not only was it a highly enjoyable adventure, but it also taught the players a new respect for NPCs.

*Yes, **Jack** was one of the finest of our early adventures, and I hope we can persuade Roger Hall to write again sometime. Generally, most people found #24 gave them some extra ideas for playing the Thief class; I hope the issue you have just read managed the same for magic users. Illusionists should be the next class to get the treatment; there is still time for you to get your ideas down on paper.*

#25 attracted more mixed mail, raising the old question of 'cultures' in frp, and a few other matters besides.

Ian Yates, Warrington, Cheshire: Although I said I would be against the Far Eastern special, I must admit I enjoyed it and found parts of it useful. **Monsters From The Folklore of the Philippines** was interesting; I hope to see more articles on folklore from around the world, but especially British folklore!

I'm looking forward to the Norse special — I hope you go into detail about Asgard and Jotunheim. Oh! — and no articles on **Vikki the Viking**!

Vikki the Viking??

Simon Bartz, Cardiff: I think specials are a bad idea. I saw the Far Eastern one and didn't touch it as it wouldn't fit into my campaign.

Chris Hunt: Was #25 really the best you could do when writing with **Bushido** fans 'specially' in mind? Apart from the scenario (which looked very good, though I haven't played it yet), all the articles were for the **D&D** games.

This came as a great disappointment, as recently your magazine has improved greatly from the TSR Monthly it used to be. The discursive articles retain a great degree of usefulness whatever game one plays. This is why I still buy **IMAGINE** magazine whilst not playing **TM**$^{AD\&D}$; very much preferring Bushido and a game you may have heard of called **Runequest**.

And what is the use of a news page if Doug Cowie reviews conventions before he visits them? I thought 1984 was *last* year.

Martin Keel: I'm afraid #25 wasn't really my scene. Surely, Orientals shouting *hai* or committing *hari-kiri* with their *katanas* or whatever is more part of **Bushido**? Don't get me wrong, I'm not against a Celtic, Norse or some other feel to a campaign and I actually use some of the stuff you publish. The thing that worries me is the introduction and availability of so much multi-cultural information marks a trend towards a totally flavourless game which makes it irrelevant what system the DM says he is playing.

Having played a number of frp games, I find it is generally the rules which give them feel and direction — the 'cults' in **RQ**, the simplicity of combat in the Advanced game, and the extreme simplicity of **Tunnels & Trolls**. If a DM uses the source material from, say, #25 in one of these systems, with the culture and language-specific ideas, then the flavour of the system is lost.

A novel point. Most people have been arguing for the submerging of the system, so that the rules are invisible and the players draw the 'feel' of their play from the milieu in which they adventure. Any more votes for the individuality of systems?

Dave Harper, Tonbridge, Kent: In support of David Gray (**Letters**, #25) — why not more material for the **DRAGONQUEST** game? For TSR to sit on this excellent system makes very little sense. The **D&D** games have their audience. The market for **DQ** is very different, and would give TSR a grip on the sector of the market which the D&D games are inherently unsuited for, in competition with more complex and realistic products of other companies. The D&D and DQ games complement each other. So please, more material for DQ — and particularly the **Arcane Wisdom** supplement, said (#7) to be ready for release when SPI were taken over.

Gavin Cameron, Kenton, Middx: On the subject of Special issues, I would like to say that so far they have been very good, although the Far East wasn't the best you've done. I look forward to the Norse, and why don't you do a **Belgeriad** special?

In the Far Eastern Special, why didn't you concentrate more on 'chat' rather than on publishing 101 new weapons for the D&D games. Still, it was quite well done, and as a result one of my co-editors plans to buy a copy of **Bushido**.

Andy 'Scarface' Green, High Wycombe, Bucks: Having just ploughed my way through your far Eastern Special, I have mixed feelings that I thought I would share with you.

I am the Judge in a **GANGBUSTERS®** campaign, with a group of 2nd-3rd level characters. If you people can do an edition for the **Bushido** game, then why not for **GB**? — another campaign module, perhaps. The others, especially GB3, are of excellent standard.

*An interesting collection of opinions. Frankly, I can't hold out a lot of hope for you **DQ** and **GANGBUSTERS** games fans. I think the days when publishers could bring out a game on just about any time period or setting and make money are behind us. It's fascinating (and quite frightening!) just watching the market for Science Fiction rpgs recede, never mind that for 1930s Chicago. But since the **Call of***

Letters

*Cthulhu game is now pretty popular, maybe you can pick up some ideas from that – and next issue might be useful to you. With a bit of preparation, **A Nice Night For Screaming** could be just what you wanted.*

*But DQ, well, what can I say? Whatever state **Arcane Wisdom** was in three years ago, it is very unlikely that it will ever see the light of day. If you remember the very beginnings of this magazine, you'll recall that there was considerable outcry about the cessation of **PAN**, the newsletter of the Players Association, and a fine publication. Our argument was, how could **PAN** and **IMAGINE** magazine compete for limited resources without us always being aware that every hour spent on the newsletter could have been spent on the larger and more demanding publication? I think the same is true of the relationship of the **D&D** and **DRAGONQUEST** games. Designers might think they were being given 'secondary' projects; sales staff might resent time wasted trying to point out the differences to retailers.... It goes on. I don't think it is a problem easily resolved, but I appreciate what a disappointment the whole business must be to DQ players. Maybe, just maybe, we can do our bit to help, sometime.*

Oh, oh.... more trouble from another games producer. What have we done this time?

Jack Jaffe, Games For Pleasure, London: I welcome your favourable review of my **Save The President!** game in your April issue. However, your reviewer appears to object to my name being prominently displayed on the game and its components. If he has any knowledge of copyright law, he should appreciate that my name, as the copyright holder, *must* be displayed on all the components, but more importantly, he must be unaware that the **Society of Inventors of Games & Mathematical Attractions (SIGMA)** has always argued that just as novelists' names are prominently associated with their books, so should games inventors be with their games. This for two reasons: 1) the invention of a professionally designed game is just as much a creative achievement as the work of a novelist and 2) if the consumer buys a game by X and enjoys it, he is much more likely to buy another of X's games.

*Valid enough, although I'd be a sight more impressed if JJ wasn't the founder of **SIGMA**. The Americans seem to have a much higher awareness of games' authors, and individual designers are accorded varying degrees of respect or loathing by the buying public. Maybe us Brits (cue: **Land of Hope and Glory**) just think a game should stand or fall on its merits alone, not on past glories, nor on pretty phrases, nor yet on the glossy media presentation of its author. Then again, maybe we just don't notice.*

And while we're scoring points....

John Lasker, Buffalo, New York: I just finished #20. Nice issue. This was my first British mag, and it was everything for me, but it was for clerics and that isn't a popular class for some people.

That's not what I wanted to say. Your modules are *awesome* — the UK series, your magazine modules and all that jazz. There's no comparison; your modules have more fantasy, more realism, and just plain better class. Maybe you'll start another British invasion; oh no, the Red Coats are coming!!

*I've checked around the office, and I can't find anyone who ever worked for Butlins. Thanks John, and welcome aboard. Any other Americans out there reading this magazine – we'd love to hear from you. All those who write to this magazine before the closing date of October 1st will win a **free** explanation of what Butlins is, and our undying gratitude. And tell your stores to order more!!*

Hmmm, still a couple of lines left. Tell you what, we'll see what Robert Spavin has to say.

Robert Spavin, Leeds, W Yorks: I was reading through the **Letters** in #23, when 2 letters caught my eye. First, Matt Connell's letter about the declining standard of TSR modules. I think....

Ooops, sorry Matt.

*Letters edited by **Paul Cockburn***

VOP

by Ian Gibbs

I'M SORRY BRAINS, BUT FELIX IS TALLER THAN YOU BY AN INCH.
THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE HIS HAT IS BIGGER THAN MINE. C'MON, TAKE YOUR HAT OFF SHORTY!
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I. GIBBS 3/85
NUTS.

Next Issue

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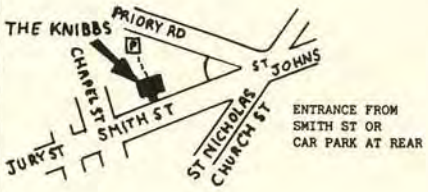

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Culture affects the way NPCs behave. For a Norse the worst imaginable fate is to die peacefully in bed. Far better to die gloriously in battle and go straight to Valhalla!

It's one thing to talk about designing a wilderness for role-playing adventures, but wildernesses don't normally exist on their own. Rather they are the wild areas on the fringe of a civilisation, and it is from this civilisation that the player characters will probably be drawn. So the bad news for you starting out as DMs is, yes, you have to design a civilisation just as much as a wilderness for your campaign!

This need not be such a hard job as it sounds. For instance, you don't have to prepare character statistics for every one of fifty million inhabitants, you will be glad to hear. For most purposes, you will only need fairly general details. You will certainly (as discussed last issue) need a big map showing where all the towns are. It is also no bad thing to prepare a few general purpose town plans — not any specific town, and not too much detail, just the general layout. These can then be brought into play for any specific town with a few modifications to meet any particular geographical requirements. Similarly, prepare a file of sample buildings that you might need: inns, smithies etc. These can be used again and again with a few modifications. Thus with a quick change of decor, the Three Tuns at Argonath can become the Jolly Sailor at Maelsport as needed. And so on. Obviously, you will want to do the same with NPCs — if you have a file of innkeepers, blacksmiths, merchants, etc, you can quickly assign one of these to any particular location as needed. Just remember not to use the same one twice in two different places — not with the same name, anyway!

You may find it useful to use buildings and characters from Pelinore or some similar source in this way. With a little adaptation to make them fit, this can save a lot of time. Nevertheless, you may want to design some areas within the bounds of civilisation in more detail; and I shall return to this next issue.

At the same time, as you put together the country around which your campaign will be based, one essential decision you will have to make concerns the culture of your fantasy civilisation. This will affect many things, not the least the sense of background that you manage to convey to your players. If all your NPCs go around behaving like ordinary 20th century Brits in chainmail, then your campaign will not have much flavour to it. So you should have a clear idea of cultural setting to use as a backdrop to the main events.

Most campaigns that I have played in have tended to utilise a sort of Tolkienish semi-medieval background, sometimes not very well developed. But I have seen other settings used effectively, notably an Arabic one. Regular readers of this magazine will be aware of the possibilities of using Egyptian, Celtic and Japanese settings — the last seem to be particularly popular, perhaps on account of images of Bruce Lee kicking his way around. There are other distinctive settings one could employ in like manner — Norsemen and Aztecs spring to mind. Or how about a campaign set in one of the early Indian empires? Or a lost Roman city in the midst of the African jungle? There are plenty of ideas to choose from.

Remember that whatever you pick, it will affect far more things than just which gods get worshipped locally. Styles of architecture will be different; types of farming will vary (try marching across a paddy field sometime and you will see that this can be important) and so the countryside will look different. And, vitally important, culture will affect the way NPCs behave (and, ideally, player characters as well, though it's hard to enforce this). In an Oriental campaign, for instance, etiquette will be very important, and player characters will be judged by others according to how well they observe elaborate social conventions. None of that in a Norse campaign, where the worst imaginable fate anyone can meet is to die peacefully in their bed. Far better to die gloriously in battle and go straight to Valhalla!

With this in mind, there is no reason why you shouldn't devise your own fantasy culture. Some features you may be able to work out logically. For instance, factors like style of housing and agriculture will be influenced by whatever climate you decide to have. A hot desert land — perhaps whitewashed, flat-roofed mud-brick houses in little villages clustered around oases. A mountainous, snowy land — perhaps log cabins with sloping roofs in isolated settings. On the other hand, some of the social characteristics will probably be entirely up to your imagination. What sort of religion? Are they a very religious people or not? Does your society live to a very strict moral code, or does everyone do pretty much what they please?

Answers to questions like these will have an important bearing on how NPCs will generally tend to act in certain situations. If a band of marauding orcs threatens a village, what will the villagers most likely do? If they are from a hardy, self-sufficient culture they will tend towards grabbing axes and pitchforks and attacking the orcs on their own account. If from a softer society, they will simply send for help at the first sign of danger.

And some attitudes can influence the flavour of a campaign strongly. In my own fantasy campaign, for instance, the dominant religion is strongly opposed to the practice of magic (man should only prosper through prayer). Thus any magician foolish enough to go around casting spells in public is likely to be set upon. On the other hand, magic is hard to simply stamp out, so many magicians flourish in secret, and the occasional bribe in the right place keeps them on the right side of the law.

How far you want to go towards making up your own culture is up to you, as long as you have a basic feel for it that you can impart to the players. You don't have to do a Tolkien and even make up languages and literature for it. But you can if you like!

Roger Musson

The Space Where The Amateur Press Tells The Professionals Where They're Going Wrong

SOAPBOX

This month's contributor: FOX, Creator of *Redfox*

The Female Image in Fantasy

Way back in the mists of time, when the infamous *DragonLords* was waging a great debate on sexism, I tried to come up with a cover illustration of an appropriately 'over the top' style to highlight the controversy. It can't be done. The area of women in fantasy is already so over the top that no-one would notice the difference.

A typical cover picture shows a beautiful maiden hacking away at a huge dragon, protected only by a wisp of silk, while suspended several hundred feet in the air. One is given to wondering, 'even if she does defeat it, how will she survive the drop?'

It is true that this type of approach is backed up by a great fantasy/sf tradition dating back to the American pulp magazines of the 1920s. Let's take Conan as an example. The cover for 'Black Colossus' in *Weird Tales* in 1933 shows a naked girl at the foot of a jade statue, looking somewhat distressed (the girl, not the statue) and no barbarians in sight! The same magazine, in 1936, printed 'Red Nails'; this time the cover depicted a naked woman sprawled on an altar, held down by two more women, while a fourth prepared to stick a knife into her. True, they were not all that extreme, some even have Conan himself in the picture! Usually, there would be the inevitable scantily clad woman draped gracefully around him, while he prepared to fight off some marauding beast with a free hand.

One facet of feminism allows women these days to take more of an active role in the heroics, rather than their former roles as either prize (the damsel in distress type), or at best a sultry siren who lured our hero into another dastardly trap. Unfortunately, however, her costume hasn't kept up with her career. It was with the introduction of FRP games that the discrepancy became obvious.

Take the premise that, in fantasy, everybody is larger than life, and has clothes to match. This idea is fine, until it gets in the way of the game mechanics. I have met a lot of female characters who walk around like tin cans, but very few in the traditional chainmail bikinis! Take the cover of *RuneQuest 2* — that woman is going to be in big trouble if the monster finishes climbing off her shield. Compare this with the virtually identical American version; identical, except that she is armoured for battle — and far more accurate to the rules system.

Science Fiction is somewhat different, where you have the technology to keep the temperature at any level — especially aboard ship, it hardly matters whether you wear anything or nothing. I am a little dubious about the skin-tight spacesuits, however, and the way in which they pick out every muscle on the women, but not the men.

Superheroes always have the faithful standby invented by Stan Lee for the *Fantastic Four* way back in the '60s — something called 'unstable molecules'. I'm not sure what they are, but it means a costume made of the stuff is skin-tight, changes to any shape or size, is temperature controlled, almost never gets torn, and disappears under ordinary clothing. Wonderful. Maybe that is what they use for those skin-tight spacesuits. It's also machine washable, and the colours never run!

The whole problem of the image of women in fantasy, and how they should be portrayed in role-playing games, is one which should concern all GMs. It is not just the question of how a female character should dress — that's only on the surface (if you'll pardon the pun!). There is also the question of a female character's position in society, discrimination within the game world, and so on. The majority of fantasy games take place in a pseudo-medieval world, based on an idealised image of medieval society. The background they draw on places any woman in a subservient role. How can anyone play a female character in a world with this ideology? She will be discriminated against at every turn, being an extreme exception to the norm.

Women's roles in other games do little to relieve the stigma of sexism which is attached to fantasy role-playing games. It is this image, I think, which puts a lot of women off FRP games as a source of entertainment. Who wants to play a game which places your sex on such a level? The prejudices are reinforced by the images on the covers of games, magazines and associated books. Until this is changed, few women will be attracted to FRP games.

One step forward in the battle to equalise the sexes can take place in your own game. Why base your game world on an antiquated, highly biased, and uneven medieval society? This is a fantasy game we are talking about, after all, why be limited by the background you initially receive? You are the only person responsible for the game you run, and the way it appears to outsiders. Wouldn't you rather be represented by a game which treats all its players and characters equally?

Fantasy role-playing games have grown and matured over the last ten years; there have been some big advances in ideas and systems. But the only way FRP is going to throw off the immature schoolboy image which it still retains in many people's eyes is by accepting that the traditional female role in fantasy is outdated and needs replacing. Otherwise, we are going to be left with the chain-mail bikinis, and Frank Frazetta covers, which offend half the population, at least.

Press Cuttings

This issue I'll start with a look at some of the multitude of postal gaming zines available. There really is a vast number of these, and they cater for every taste in postal gaming, fanzine style and chat you could possibly ever want!

MAD POLICY is one of the longest running postal gaming zines, having reached the impressive total of 105 issues. Admittedly Richard did take a 'rest' from the zine for a while, but 100 issues is not something to be undertaken lightly. **MP** tends to feature less chat nowadays, but the latest issue includes the annual hobby report, with details of the number of fanzines started, folded and in circulation over the past year. The current total stands at 74 postal gaming zines — I said there were a lot! Mad Policy does not have many vacancies in the games it is running, but has standard Diplomacy as well as word guessing games such as **Jotto**. It runs to very accurate five-weekly deadlines.

VIENNA runs to even shorter deadlines than MP, as Richard (Egan) produces an intermediate gameszine between the six-weekly issues of Vienna. The main zine runs standard Diplomacy, **Railway Rivals** and a vast range of Diplomacy variants. This trend in variants is shown in the main zine, as Richard attempts to publish a new one each issue, giving details of the new map and rules. There are also games reviews, and a number of very detailed, very interesting articles on strategy, how to play the different countries, etc. Vienna is definitely a zine to consider if you are interested in playing a fast game of Diplomacy by post, or in the strategy behind the game.

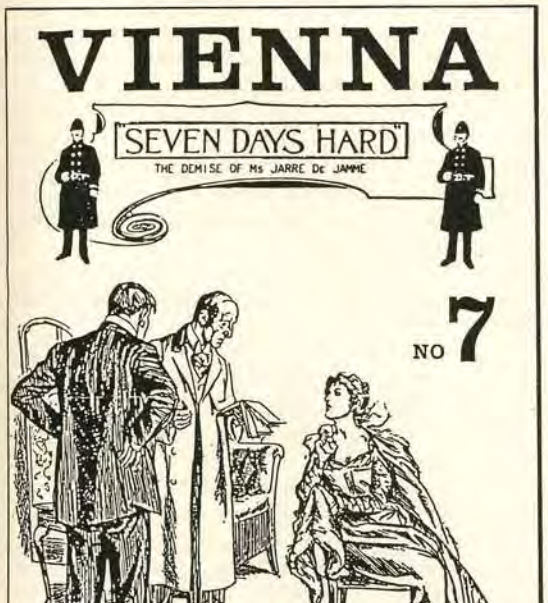
Another zine which offers a wide range of Diplomacy variants is **HACKING TIMES**. Dylan has sent me the results of his variants poll, and as a result he is planning to run **Mercator**, Railway Rivals, **Cline-9** (nine-player Diplomacy), **Civilization** and **Ultra-Stab**. He also promises to run **Machiavelli** when he can get a copy of the game! Hacking Times already runs standard Diplomacy (who doesn't?), **Executive** (Dylan's own variant game) and **Mornington Crescent** (yes, that famous Radio 4 game!). The major part of the magazine is chat, with issue 6 featuring articles on fanzines, Diplomacy, SF, the Croydon Young Liberals (!) and much more. HT has a lot of vacancies for players, so you should be able to get involved in one of their games very easily.

One fanzine which *doesn't* run standard Diplomacy (except for a computer adjudicated version) is Alan Parr's **HOPSCOTCH**; in fact it runs no Diplomacy games at all. Instead, the *raison d'être* behind the zine is to promote and provide openings in new and unusual postal games. Thus, games include **Plutonomy**, Railway Rivals, **Mystic Wood, 221B Baker St, Kingmaker** and **United** (which Alan designed). There are, unfortunately, not many openings in these games but Hopscotch always contains news of games openings in other zines, plus offers from individuals to run games — such as Bob Parkin's offer of a fantasy game in the latest issue. So, if you are looking to play an unusual games by post (Postal Tiddlywinks, anyone?) Alan and Hopscotch are a very good guide to just where you'll be able to do it.

MOUSE POLICE is a zine which has improved tremendously since its initial 'odd, but promising' issues. The latest issue still contains plenty of chat about University life and Rob's views on such matters, but it is rather better organised than before. MoPo also has a nice line in home designed games, with

Dodgems, Mouse Police, Robowars and **Death Cycles** all on offer. There is also **The Song of the Night**, a Diplomacy variant, and the slightly more standard games of Railway Rivals, **Judge Dredd, Scrabble, En Gardel, King Arthur Role-playing, Stab, Blind Diplomacy** and **Two Board Diplomacy**! Rob certainly packs a lot of games into a small space.

ZADRAGORZETTE is a fairly new games zine, which exists to publish information about Michael Jacobs' **Zadragor** fantasy campaign. In many ways it is similar to Rob Nott's **2112** fantasy campaign, and is based on the same rules system. Michael would like to increase the number of players in Zadragor, and he is also planning to start a Science Fiction Roleplaying campaign, and possibly a **Call of Cthulhu** game — all to be run through Zadragorzette. Games like Zadragor are more involved and more time-consuming than most postal games for their creators, and are usually a labour of love — you have to work hard to run a successful postal roleplaying campaign. They do offer a much cheaper, and in some much friendlier, amateur alternative to commercial games like **Tribes of Crane** or **Crasimoff's World**, and could be worth trying if you cannot afford the price of a commercial postal game.


VIENNA
SEVEN DAYS HARD"
THE DEMISE OF Ms JARRE De JAMME
NO 7
"THE DETECTIVE TOOK COPIOUS NOTES, AND SAID THAT HE HAD SEVERAL CLUES."

TAU CETI PHOENIX: APOCRYPHA is an Australian postal gaming and SF fanzine; how it reached here, I'm not altogether sure! The Apocrypha part of the zine offers pieces on Science Fiction in Australia, a (fairly) complete guide to fanspeak, comics and FRP games. The Tau Ceti Phoenix section (the two magazines are published back to back) offers Diplomacy and Diplomacy variants. I'm not sure that it would be particularly cheap to play a postal game in an Australian fanzine from the UK, but the magazine does offer some insights into the Australian equivalent of our gaming hobby. Only for the rich or the very curious, I think.

FASTER THAN LIGHT 1 is Alex Zbyslaw's replacement for his zine **JAWZ**; at least it is a replacement for the games section, the chat is going into another of Alex's zines. Alex intends to run FTL to three weekly deadlines, and he should be able to produce a very fast zine which offers Diplomacy, Railway Rivals, **Origins of WWII**, and **Empires of the Middle Ages**. The zine is not only produced on a computer, each copy is actually printed on the computer! This means that Alex can produce the zine extremely cheaply and cut down any printer delays.

Another new zine which takes the same approach to production is **VOOM VAT**. This is edited by Mark Nelson, who intends to run some postal games through the zine with Judge Dredd being the only one on offer initially. Most of this issue is taken up by a new guild for **RQ2**, some new skills, and an **AD&D®** game article on elves. Mark calls the zine a FanSheet rather than Fanzine, and he promises to publish any interesting articles anyone sends him on just about anything — so here's your chance to see something of yours in print!

New FRP zines are still appearing, this month seeing **MONSTEROUS PERVERSION** from Pete Blanchard. It is a terrible title, but the zine contains a lot of very interesting articles, such as Vampires, Dinosaurs, and a complete scenario for **Toon**. The major part of this issue is taken up by The Secret of the Shalhavishra — a Call of Cthulhu scenario, presented in the form of a fictional account of the plot. All in all, a very readable first issue; a shame that it is so expensive. **ORC'S REVENGE** 1 covers the AD&D and **MERP** games, providing a lot of source material as well as a MERP scenario. The standard of writing is not all it could be, and the layout confuses the eye in places, but it is not a bad first issue of a hardware zine. John Breakwell has been contributing to fanzines such as **Demon's Drawl** for a while now, and he has gone into print himself with **THE GREEN GOBLIN** 1. John intends to feature useful material in TGG, but to steer away from the clichéd new monsters, magic items and character classes. He succeeds reasonably well in this first issue with a piece explaining the ecology behind the Measel, a new cult for RQ, a piece on religion, and an AD&D game scenario called Welcome to Hell! TGG could develop into a good zine along the lines of Demon's Drawl, and is certainly worth watching. **GRIMLORD** 1 is another zine which will be worth watching; this first issue includes plenty of chat, and articles on RQ, gaming accessories and postal gaming. It's well produced, and cheap too!

That leaves me just space before the addresses to mention a few of the comics zines which have been sent in. **REDFOX** 3 is the latest issue dealing with the adventures of that petite barbarian; the art is improving all the time, and this issue sees the scripting debut of a certain Mike Lewis... **ESCAPE** is a semi-professional comics magazine which attempts to cover alternatives to the mainstream comics. Thus it includes new strips by the likes of Hunt Emerson and Eddie Campbell, as well as interviewing artists and writers. The latest issue contains a fascinating chat with Steve Bell of *Guardian* fame. Escape is well worth looking at if you want to find out what is going on outside of the mainstream Marvel and DC comics. **SHADOWS** and **FUSION** are both well-written comics fanzines which provide articles on new and old comics creators alike. Finally, **FANTASY ADVERTISER** provides a first-rate comics news service and the latest issue features Cerebus and an interview with his creator Dave Sim.

Mike Lewis

Zine Addresses

Ansible, Dave Langford, 94 London Rd, Reading, Berks RG1 5AU (5 for £2); **British Science Fiction Association**, Sandy Brown, 18 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, Lanarkshire G72 9NA (£7 per year); **Crystal Ball**, Duncan Harris, 2 St Mary's Park Rd, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8QN (30p); **Demon's Drawl**, Jeremy Nuttall, 49 Longdown Rd, Congleton, Cheshire (55p); **Escape**, Escape Publishing, 156 Munster Rd, London SW6 5RA (£1.30); **Fantasy Advertiser**, Martin Skidmore, 25 Cornleaze, Withywood, Bristol BS13 7SG (50p); **Faster Than Light**, Alex Zbyslaw, 197 Herbert Avenue, Poole, Dorset BH12 4HR (15p); **The Fiery Cross**, Tom Stacey, The Mill House, Rays Hill, Hawridge, Nr Chesham, Bucks HP5 2UJ (60p); **Fusion**, Hugh Campbell, 46 Kirkland Rd, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire KA25 6HU (40p); **The Green Goblin**, John Breakwell, 4 Balfour Rd, Northend, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 0DJ (40p); **Grimlord**, Richard Sproston, 25 Margery Avenue, Scholar Green, Stoke-on-Trent (35p); **Hacking Times**, Dylan Harris, 76 Haddo House, Haddo St, Greenwich, London SE10 (40p); **Hopscotch**, Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gardens, Tring, Herts HP23 4DN (50p); **Imazine**, Paul Mason, 16 Corncrake Close, Sutton Coldfield, W Midlands B72 1HY (50p); **Journal of the Senseless Carnage Society**, Simon Hartley, 5 Burgh Heath Rd, Epsom, Surrey KT17 4LW (65p); **Mad Policy**, Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Rd, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6PG (40p); **Monsterous Perversion**, Pete Blanchard, 4 Holly Acre, Prey Heath, Mayford, Woking, Surrey GU22 0SL (85p); **Mouse Police**, Rob Wilson, Penryn, 4 Campion Rd, Leamington Spa, Warks CV32 5XQ (40p); **Next Stop Jupiter**, Jez Keen, 1 Glenfield Rd, Stockport SK4 2QP (50p); **Orc's Revenge**, M Hanson, 66 East Towers, Pinner, Middx HA5 1TN (50p); **Redfox**, A McGilvray, 78 Foxhall Rd, Nottingham NG7 6LJ (75p); **Runestone**, Bill Lucas, 26 Parker Close, Letchworth, Herts SG6 3RT (50p); **Sewars**, Chris Baylis, 12 The Fryth, Basildon, Essex SS14 3PN (80p); **Shadows**, Pete Howard, 18 Anderson Crescent, Great Barr, Birmingham (60p); **Stardate**, 17 Dale View, Grimsby, Humberside DN33 1RE (50p); **Superhero UK**, Simon Burley, 68 Falconhurst Rd, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6SD (60p); **Tau Ceti Phoenix: Apocrypha**, PO Box 111, Midland 6056, W Australia (?); **Vienna**, Richard Egan, 64 Rookery Rd, Knowle, Bristol BS4 2DT (40p); **Voom Vat**, Mark Nelson, 67 Moor St, Sponden, Derby DE2 7EB (40p); **Zadragorzette**, Michael Jacobs, Elm Lodge, Sylvan Way, Bognor Regis, W Sussex PO21 2RS (40p)

TURNBULL TALKING

As I write, TSR UK celebrates five years since it officially began in these Isles. Not the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, mind you — that was around some six years earlier (strewth, how old we're all getting) — but what one might call the official representation of Lake Geneva and (sort of) Gary Gygax, the man who started it all.

At times like these one can get a bit maudlin (an emotion assisted, but I am assured not caused, by the celebratory drink). One is apt to contemplate the unsolved and unsolvable, to mourn lost characters (Arethusa — **polymorphed** into a meat pie — I must remember not to tell you about that disgrace) and to look back at people past and present; for a prime example, the unique Jeanette Blaaser, whose association with TSR UK is as long as my own, and probably much more valued, whose capacity for Baileys has become legendary, and who has done the fruit machine market no end of unexpected good.

And one begins to wonder what has been achieved. Measured in sterile things like sales volume and leverage, it's easy to quantify. What isn't so easy — and I would have to write it on my character sheet, good or bad — is what has happened to the hobby because of TSR during the last five years.

The fact is that the hobby generated TSR, not the other way round. The hobby is owed a debt by TSR, not the other way round. The hobby is the whole *raison d'être* of TSR, not the other way round.

Or, contrariwise, if TSR has done nothing, or not good enough, for the hobby, we might as well cash in our chips and go home. We emerged from the primeval slime five years ago to do a decent job — have we done it? or should the slime have kept us in the first place?

TSR UK is 5 years old.
Time to celebrate — or time to contemplate?

And that's for you to decide.

This is where you come in. What follows, and a lot of what has gone before, look statements, but they are really questions. For you, I hope, to answer — and don't pull any punches. Treat us, in your responses, as if you were the DM and TSR UK the party of adventurers who, having somehow got through D1 and D2, managed to turn SSE in search of the final encounter in D3.

Well, let's start with this august publication. **IMAGINE**™ magazine is just over two years old. The Survey, conducted recently — and with a good response: thanks — showed pretty clearly what you think of it, and it's not all bad news, by any means. But you don't need a Survey — write and tell us what you like and what you don't like in the magazine.

Then there's GamesFair. So far as the hobbyists at TSR are concerned, that's the best weekend of the year, and it seem the delegates who attend like it. But it's easy to be complacent about something you enjoy yourself — the trick is to discover whether the majority view agrees with you or thinks you're in what they call a self-delusion situation. Is GamesFair too large or too small (measured in number of delegates)? Is it organised too much or not enough? Are the 'shops' too obtrusive or too remote? Are the competitions enjoyed? What other events would be welcomed?

And there's the Players Association. We were as fond of the PA as were its stalwart membership, but finally had to admit it wasn't doing the job we set it to do — ie foster strong links between TSR UK and the hobby. From the resources point of view and the objective point of view, the decision to close it was the correct one. But could anything else take over its purpose? Are we doing enough for individual players out there? For clubs? For the newcomer to the strange world of fantasy role-playing?

In general, what else? How can we best support and encourage the development of the hobby?

Let me have your ideas! They will be considered carefully and, even though there are no bars of gold buried in our back garden, we will do what we sensibly can.

One word of apology, before I turn over the rest of this page to news of the latest products from our cousins overseas. Mervyn Lemon masqueraded last time under the name Mervyn Simon — an error from the typesetting department, honest!

D J Turnbull

ILLUMINATIONS extra

In the shops now — as they say in the trade — are a host of exciting goodies from TSR Inc, with the promise of more to come. Let's start by looking at those products which arrived this month.

The big news for the players of the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game must be AC4 **The Book of Marvellous Magic**. This compendium of miscellaneous magical items gathers together all those that have appeared in the first three rules sets (Basic-Expert-Companion) and then adds 500 new items, never seen before! A boon to all those DMs who were finding themselves short of ideas.

Modules there are aplenty. For the **D&D®** game there are B8 **Journey To The Rock**, and the UK-written O2 **Blade of Vengeance** one-on-one adventure. For the Advanced game there are C3 **The Lost Island of Castanamir** and C4 **To Find A King**; competition modules with pre-rolled characters and scoring systems. C3 is for levels 1-4 and C4 for levels 4-7. The **DM's Screen** returns as well, revamped, with one of the screens now suitable for player use.

Two more products for the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES**™ game — the adventure MH5 **Cats Paw** and the MHAC4 **Pit of the Viper** package, with 70 fold-up figures.

And the second part of the **Eleanor Moraes** adventure for the **STAR FRONTIERS®** game has arrived: SFKH3 **Face of the Enemy**. All this plus the **DRAGONLANCE**™ **Chronicles, Volume 1, Dragons of Autumn Twilight**, the **D&D Cartoon Showbooks, ENDLESS QUEST**™ books 24-26, #94-5 of **DRAGON®** magazine and #99 of **S&T**™ magazine are waiting to be snapped up — go get 'em.

It gets even better. Watch out for the **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Battle System**™ an amazing package for mass combat, completely compatible with either the **AD&D** or **D&D** games. 800 die-cut counters, rules, scenarios, 2 metal miniatures, army roster sheets.... You'll love it. Out Soon — watch this space.

PHALANX

by R. Grenville-Evans

CHUNK THE ELEVENTH: THE HEART OF THE BEAST

WEASEL AND OGRYN DISGUISE THEMSELVES AS LORD BANSHURGA DANASKMI'S **PRIESTS**, AND MINGLE WITH THE FLOCK. WHILE THE BOY HIMSELF CONDUCTS A DUBIOUS CEREMONY WHICH WILL SEVER MOURLA'S SPIRITUAL LINK WITH THE MERMAIDS.....

SHE IS RESISTING... IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! ...NO ONE COULD SHIELD THEIR MIND FROM MY POWER!
LISTEN TO MY VOICE, MOURLA.... KILL THIS MUTATION AND SEVER THE BINDING CORD WHICH STRANGLES YOUR FREEDOM..
WEAS, SOMEBODY'S KNOCKING ON THIS DOOR BEHIND US.
GO AND LEAN AGAINST IT! IT MIGHT BE THOSE TWO DOGSBODIES WE THOUGHT WE'D FLATTENED!
OUCH! WHAT...? OH!!
EXCUSE ME... OOPS... GOT TO GO BACK HERE A MO.... SORRY... SORRY... CAN I JUST GET TO THAT DOOR...?
AH!
TAP SCRATCH
I THINK I CAN FEEL A BIT OF A DRAUGHT BLOWING UP ME CLOTH, SO I'LL JUST PUSH IT TOOOOOOH H
OTHRUNU!!
OGRYN! JUST THE YOUNG MAN I WANTED! TAKE THE SWORD... RESCUE POOR MOURLA ...AND KEEP AWAY FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE FLOOR!
THERE'S BUT ONE FREAK AMONG US, DANASKMI!!
EXCUSE ME... CAN I JUST PUSH THROUGH... THANKS ... SORRY... SORRY.
KILL THIS FREAK MOURLA! KILL IT NOW, AND JOIN ME TO... AHHH!!
DRAGONS! AND MOURLA'S TRANCE BROKEN! AND THE TWO FOOLS WHO SHOULD BE ASHES! HOW....?

OTHRUNU! WHAT IS HAPPENING?
THE DRAGONS WILL DESTROY THE FLOOR... THE SEA IS DIRECTLY BELOW... THE PHALANX WILL BE MUCH WEAKER, THE MORE WE PROTECT FROM HIM!
TAKE CARE, JUG-EARS... I'M AFTER YOUR NASTY BLOOD! LET MOURLA GO!
YOU'LL WISH YOU HAD NOT ESCAPED, YOU HALF-WIT YOKEL! NOT ONLY AM I A MASTER MAGICIAN, BUT A MIGHTY WARRIOR! I SHALL SLAY YOU WITH BUT ONE....
QUICKLY, MOURLA, ESCAPE INTO THE ADJOINING CHAMBER...
NO, I MUST TAKE TO THE SEA... PLEASE HELP ME GET MY SISTER TO THE WATER FIRST OF ALL...
IN A SEC...
THE PHALANX... OTHRUNU, ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE WHOLE VILLAGE IS THE MONSTER IT FEARS?
THE BEAST THAT LURKS IS THE DRAGON YOU HAVE SEEN... AND SHALL SEE AGAIN! THEY DO NOT REALIZE WHY THEY WANTED TO KEEP YOU HERE... WHEN YOU WOUNDED IT, A LIFE HAD TO BE 'TAKEN'...
THE MOURNING DRAGONS ARE THE OFFSHOOTS OF THE SAME SPELL... KEEP TO THE WALLS!!
WHAT... CAN I BELIEVE MY EYES? OTHRUNU!
YOU RECOGNIZE ME AFTER ALL THESE YEARS....
IT WAS YOUR MEDDLING WITH SUPERNATURE WHICH MADE RAGS OF TEMPORAL STRUCTURE ... I SPENT SOME 'TIME' IN A PARALLEL WORLD WHERE I MET AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE OF YOURS.... STYNCH! I KNOW STYNCH CONTROLS YOUR SPELL... BUT NOW I CONTROL STYNCH...
OTHRUNU... BUT YOU SHOULD BE STILL WALLED UP, OUT OF MISCHIEF... PRESERVED, AS ALL THESE OTHERS ARE, UNTIL I FIND HOW TO UNDO YOUR MEDDLING...
THE... THE CHANGE... BUT THIS SHOULD NOT HAPPEN BEFORE MIDNIGHT...
WE FIXED HIM. I HYPNOTIZED WEASEL INTO HYPNOTIZING STYNCH....
...INTO SOUNDING THE GONG TWELVE HOURS EARLY... AND WITH HALF THE VILLAGE POPULATION IN THE SEA, YOUR POWER AS THE DRAGON WILL BE SOMEWHAT DIMINISHED!
BUT I CAN STILL HAVE MOURLA... SHE IS WORTH MORE THAN A HUNDRED STUPID VILLAGERS!
...TRULY... MY... RIGHT 'HAND!! TO STOP ME, YOU WILL HAVE TO KILL HER FIRST!
OGRYN HOLDS THE ONLY WEAPON WHICH CAN HARM THE BEAST... BUT MUST HE END MOURLA'S LIFE? ALL WILL BE TOLD IN THE NEXT AND FINAL CHUNK!!!

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DRUMS ON FIRE MOUNTAIN

by Graeme Morris and Tom Kirby

In a dark cell, Rollo Bargmann, merchant of Thyatis, turns away in disgust from his prisoner; capturing this wretch cost a ship and 60 gallant men. Then his heart hardens again, for he must find an answer to the question that haunts him.

What new evil is casting its shadow over the storm-swept eastern reaches of the Sea of Dread?

The trading routes are no longer safe. The attacks of the green-skinned "orcs of the sea" and the mysterious "ship-bane" go unchecked. The influence of some unseen master has made them into an organised menace. Soon the questioning will be over; Rollo will know enough to track the threat to its lair...

X8 - Drums on Fire Mountain

is for use with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Expert set and is for 5-8 characters of levels 5-8

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